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AN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

THE RETURN

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An Interview with Ahmed Abdul Rahman

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Arab Summit Adopts Palestinian Peace Initiative

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Palestinian martyrs have names too. Nidal Fouad Al-Rabadi is one of them.

Born in Jerusalem on April 8, 1973, and killed at the age of 16 on July 19, 1989, Nidal Fouad Al-Rabadi is a "Martyr of the Glorious *Intifadah*."

Cover photo: President Yasser Arafat seated next to Sultan Qabous of Oman at the Arab League summit in Casablanca, Morocco. Al-Rawass/SIPA

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Publishers are urged to send books relating to the Middle East for reviews.

Baker's Speech to AIPAC: One Step Forward, and Another Back

The United States has, once again, managed to chart a course in its policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict that prescribes paralysis.

On May 22, U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker, III addressed the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), an American-Jewish organization committed to protecting Israel's interests in this country. In his speech, which was described by a State Department official who helped to write it as "99 percent pro-Israeli," Baker stated that, "American support for Israel is the foundation of our approach to the Middle East."

The remaining one percent came in a statement that called on Israel to "lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel." Baker then asked Israel to "Foreswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights."

The significance of Baker's speech is not so much its content as its timing. Nothing in what Baker said was new. This has been U.S. policy for the past two decades. The fact that it was said before the staunchly pro-Israel lobby was what was new about it.

However, while building up to this statement regarding Israel, Baker reiterated U.S. support for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's plan for elections in the West Bank and Gaza. The purpose of these elections would be to choose local representatives that "will participate in negotiations on an interim settlement."

What is astounding about Baker's speech is that to build up the courage to be mildly critical of Israel by restating U.S. positions, Baker supported Shamir's plan that is largely viewed by Palestinians as nothing but a diversionary attempt to avoid dealing with the core issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Palestinian objections to Shamir's plan are based on numerous factors:

1. The Palestinians have the right to choose their own representatives. A vast majority of Palestinians view the PLO as their sole, legitimate representative. Therefore, Palestinians see no need for Shamir's call for elections. If he wants to talk to the Palestinians, he should address the PLO.
2. Previous experience has taught the Palestinians that the Israelis will not respect the integrity or the office of any Palestinian elected official if Israelis perceive that it is in their interest to

dispense of that elected official. A majority of Palestinians elected in 1976 as mayors of West Bank and Gaza towns have either been dismissed from their posts, expelled from the country, or imprisoned in Israeli jails. Others were maimed by Israeli-planted bombs. There is no reason to believe that the same will not happen to any newly elected Palestinians so long as Israel's occupation continues.

3. To hold the elections that the Israelis want, and the United States supports, the *Intifadah* will have to subside. This is what Shamir wants, and this is something that the Palestinians will not give. It took years of living under Israel's oppressive occupation to build up to the *Intifadah*. Palestinians do not want to take a chance on allowing the momentum of the *Intifadah* to slow down.
4. Palestinians under occupation strongly believe that they now enjoy, albeit at a tremendous cost, the upper hand in their dealings with the Israelis. Why should they let go of that advantage in their fight against Israel? What is Shamir offering in return?
5. Shamir's plan does not provide for a settlement that involves Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, it neither provides for the acceptance of a mini-Palestinian state, nor for the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Therefore, Shamir's plan offers no incentives.
6. By calling for elections among Palestinians living under Israel's occupation, Shamir is hoping that the 3 million Palestinians living outside of historical Palestine, will somehow disappear. What is to happen to those refugees living in Lebanon's refugee camps or those in Jordan and Syria? Obviously, Shamir would like Palestinian refugees to settle wherever they are and forget about their homeland. This simply will not happen.

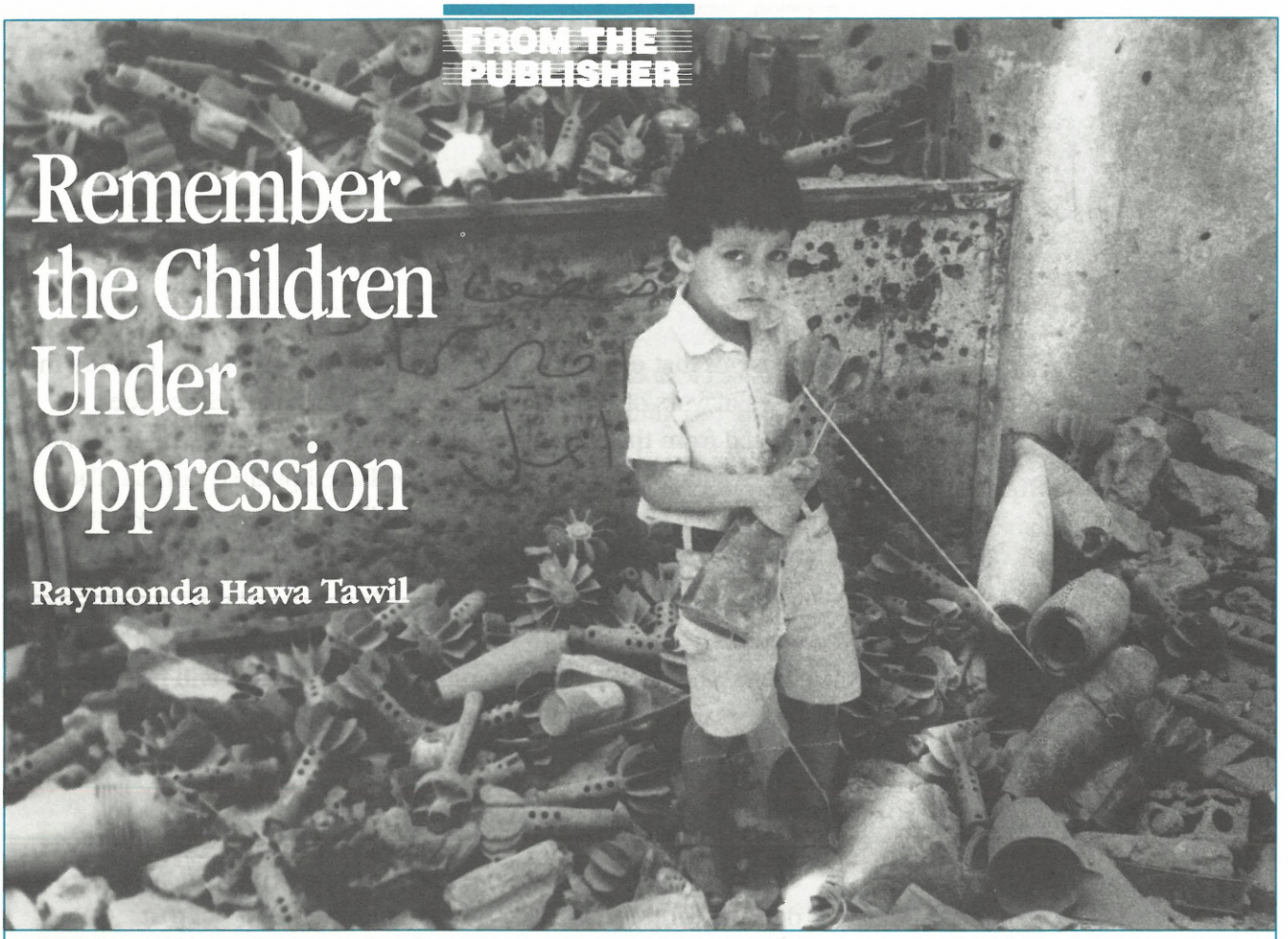
One could go on and list other shortcomings of Shamir's plan, but what we find frustrating is Baker's contradictory call for Israel to give up its idea of a greater Israel while, at the same time, supporting Israel—particularly Shamir—in its attempts to achieve that very goal.

Unless the United States withdraws its support for the Shamir plan, months down the line, we are going to find ourselves still in square one. □

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Remember the Children Under Oppression

Raymonda Hawa Tawil



Palestinian child in a refugee camp in Lebanon. photo by Said Elatab/Middle East Photo

The dreams and the resulting struggles of the youths in places like China, Lebanon, and Palestine must be admired. The young people's strong sense that their respective situations are wrong, and must therefore be confronted is shaping history —it is causing positive action. Yet, many youngsters are dying for their dreams.

In occupied Palestine, we see the killing of innocent children every day: bullets in little chests, bullets in little heads, even bullets in the littlest of babies. We see atrocities by both the Israeli army and Israeli settlers, like the bloody May 29 attack on the village of Kfar Hareth, and the unspeakable descriptions of beatings and torture. U.S. condemnation of such brutal attacks, when it is forthcoming, is of great significance.

The United States should continue to stand by any people denied democracy, including the Palestinian people and its children who are putting their lives on the line. The United States should put an end to the bloodshed by recognizing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. In occupied Palestine, the United States can and should do much more for peace.

The savage settler brutality to intimidate the Palestinian people is well documented. In one situation, a red-hot iron pole was used to torture a young man. In another, an eight-month-old was shot in the head twice and killed.

Altogether in the month of May, 50 persons were killed and 800 were wounded. There is no need to give any more of the specifics here—it is well documented elsewhere. Yet, does all that not move world opinion?

Recently, French television aired a documentary by May Masri and Jean Shamoun about the fate of so many of Lebanon's children. Living in Beirut, they are the lost children of the war. They behave like hardened adults. They are shrewd merchants bargaining with what little money they have. Everyday they fight for their very existence. They are aware of their situation and they are bitter. One boy interviewed in the film said, "What is the difference? . . . We have nothing to lose. . . . We need equality."

The Palestinian children also have nothing to lose. Whether in the camps in Lebanon or in the towns and villages of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian children are denied formal education. For those living in occupied Palestine, no schools or universities have been allowed to conduct classes with any sense of normalcy for the past two years. Those who are caught teaching outside of school are punished.

Many children between the ages of six to nine years are illiterate because they are not allowed to attend schools at the time that they

are supposed to be learning how to read. One teacher in Ramallah says that the situation is such that the children fight and play with stones, and then, they are killed by live bullets. In Lebanon the children fight and play with rifles, be they wooden or real. Normal childhood development has been disrupted.

Today, there is an identity crisis among Jews. It centers around the conflict between a dream and the failure to achieve this dream. The new Jewish struggle is symbolized in the image of the liberal humanitarian Jew conflicting with the violent image of the racist Israeli soldier that the world is watching on television news.

Israeli soldiers once believed that their army is invincible, but now, one can feel the effects of the collapsed authority. The Israeli army is resorting to cruel violence against children. Soldiers are losing their pride and dignity. Is it any wonder that in their cruel war against children, many Israeli soldiers are facing psychological problems?

The symbols of and fights for democracy in the recent Chinese student resistance have moved the whole world.

Will the Chinese army feel the same remorse as it contemplates the tragic killing of so many of its youths? Will the Chinese army, that was not so long ago a fraternal army loyal to its people and principles, continue to repress and kill the youths asking for increased democracy? When a society orders violence, it should stop and think—it is a society in danger of losing its moral base.

Israeli society, its values and morals, have been in danger for a while. What is happening in Israel should make us tremble. The mere thought that a massacre like the one at Sabra and Shatilla is possible, and that the man responsible for it, Ariel Sharon, should continue to hold a position of power is indeed horrifying. Ironically, according to the Israeli newspaper *Hadashot*, one poll shows that a plurality of Israelis, 44 percent, are confident that Sharon would be able to "put an end to the *Intifadah*."

A rightwing fascist philosphy reigns over the country. The settlers are out of the government's control, yet there are no real governmental attempts to gain control. Meanwhile, many pro-peace Israeli activists and intellectuals have been put in custody. How can it be that Israel's so-called "progressive" society allows this fascist, South African-style racism?

How is it possible that this society permits the marketing of a new video-game called *Intifadah*, where the object of the game is to quell the *Intifadah* by violence against the Palestinians? The developer of the game is a militant member of Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist Kach movement. Not only must those playing the game use violence to stop stone-throwers, they must maim the stone-throwers, as points are lost for killing Palestinians. Thus, the player loses points for deaths on either side. But, if soldiers beat and wound Palestinian stone throwers, their scores will be higher. If the player is killed, the game is lost.

How is it possible that this society permits the marketing of a new video game called Intifadah, *where the object of the game is to quell the* Intifadah *by violence against the Palestinians?*

Several weeks ago, the French intellectual Mark Halter published a new book, *The Sons of Abraham*. In it he argues that the State of Israel has created some problems, but after the Holocaust, the State of Israel gave the Jewish people a new dignity.

Does Israel's behavior today really offer the Jewish people a new-found sense of dignity?

We do honor Jewish struggles and achievements, and the memories of those Jews who died in Auschwitz at the hands of the Nazis. While their resistance is a Jewish achievement, it is also a human achievement as it has helped to enrich the whole world and bring positive changes.

Palestinian suffering is also a part of world heritage and consciousness. The suffering of the Lebanese and the Chinese people is writing a noble page in history as well.

An honor is due the youth of China, Lebanon, and Palestine. Their yearning for freedom and democracy is bound to prevail against tyranny and oppression. □

CORRECTION: It was inaccurately stated on page 4 of the April 1989 issue of *The Return* that slain Palestinian leader Abu Jihad "helped to found Fatah." In reality, along with Yasser Arafat, Abu Jihad founded Fatah.

The Accomplishments and Failures of the Casablanca Arab League Summit

Fouad Hobeika

The State of Palestine was there, but Lebanon was not. The irony is that 40 years ago, Palestine entered the Arab League as an issue, and later became a state, whereas Lebanon entered the Arab League as a state and later became an issue.

From May 22 to 24, the League of Arab States held an emergency summit in Casablanca, Morocco. In attendance were most heads of state from all the Arab countries with the notable exception of Lebanon.

The final communiqué of the Arab League summit "saluted the *Intifadah* of the Palestinian people," and denounced "the crimes of the Israeli occupation." It went on to link the Arab peace plan at the Fez Arab summit with the Palestinian peace plan adopted last year in Algiers. The communiqué welcomed the Palestine National Council resolutions and reaffirmed its support of the Palestinian peace initiative. The Arab League blessed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

At the same time, the communiqué expressed anguish over what "goes on in Lebanon," and examined Lebanon's tragic situation. A subcommittee or "troika" was established to work for the salvation of Lebanon in the next six months. That troika is composed of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, Morocco's King Hassan II, and Algeria's President Chadli Benjedid.

The opening session was three hours late, but from the moment the summit convened, the atmosphere was tense. It began very slowly. The mood was heavy and even stifling. One private meeting followed another in an endless chain. The lobbies were overcrowded, and there was rampant talk about "difficult reconciliations."

For example, there was a good deal of talk about Libya's Colonel Moammar Al-Qaddafi who did not want to attend the summit because "he wants nothing from it." Likewise, the members talked about inviting the two Lebanese premiers —Salim Al-Hoss and Michel Aoun— on grounds that Lebanon is after all a member of the Arab League. It was decided that the Lebanese question would be debated without Lebanese representation. The Arab League feared that inviting the two leaders would be interpreted as de facto acknowledgement of Lebanon's partition.

file photo

President Husni Mubarak of Egypt.

When King Hassan II formally convened the summit, an atmosphere of caution filled the room. The king's opening address was oblique and couched in very general terms, so as not to arouse sensitivities. Nevertheless, there was great hope at the summit that the 21 Arab countries present would arrive at grandiose resolutions. After all, the king knows how to guarantee the success of a summit, or at least its nonfailure.

The resolutions of the Rabat Summit in 1974 and the Fez Summit in 1982 regarding the resolution of the Palestine question, are still fresh in our memories. But, did the latest Casablanca Summit enter the realm of great Arab summits?

The answer is both "Yes" and "No." "Yes," because—

First, the Casablanca Summit was attended by every Arab state except for Lebanon. Representatives attended from 21 countries: 18 kings and presidents, one crown prince, and two ministers (Mauritania's minister of industry and Somalia's foreign minister). Reaching such a universal willingness to attend had, until the summit, been virtually impossible.

Fouad Hobeika is the editor-in-chief of the Paris-based Arabic language weekly Al-Usbu Al-Arabi. *Hobeika covered the Casablanca Arab League Summit.*

photo by Al-Rawass/SIPA

President Yasser Arafat with King Hassan II of Morocco, host of the Arab League summit held in Casablanca.

Second, Egypt returned to the Arab family in a dignified manner, through the front door.

Third, the Casablanca Summit recognized, loud and clear, the State of Palestine. Furthermore, it approved and supported the Palestinian peace plan as well as recent Palestinian breakthroughs. It also rejected Israel's recent "local elections" plan.

Fourth, the Casablanca Summit effected a series of bilateral reconciliations. Egypt and Libya, Egypt and Syria, and Syria and Palestine, seemed to put aside, at least temporarily, their past differences. These reconciliations were deemed a minimum requirement for Arab consensus.

The other answser to the question "Did the latest Casablanca Summit enter the realm of great Arab summits?" is "No."

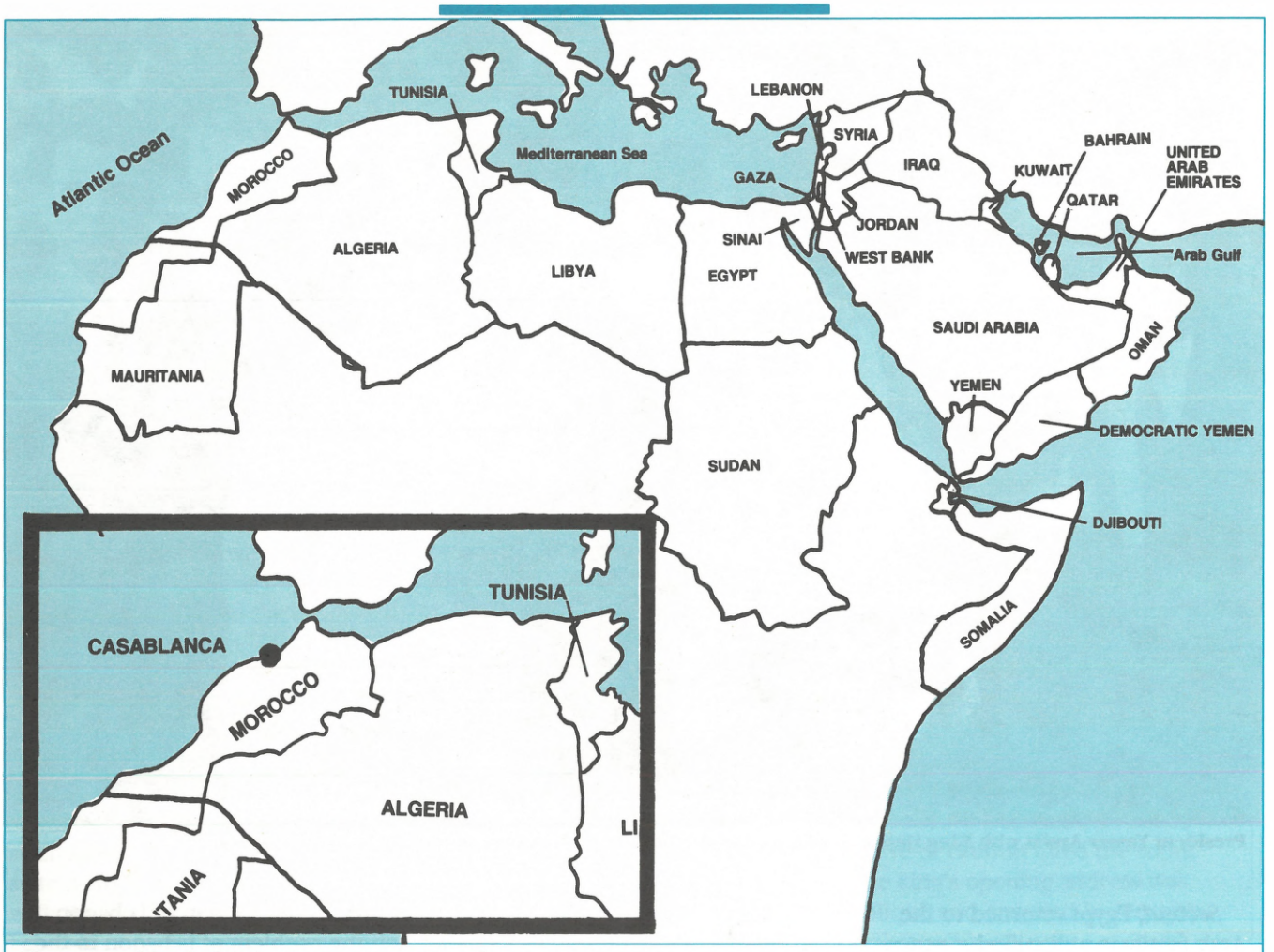
First, the Casablanca Summit left more than one Arab-Arab problem unsettled. Most important among these are the Iraqi-Syrian dispute, and the Egyptian-Sudanese split.

Second, the Casablanca Summit avoided the problem of Lebanon. It left the problem of Lebanon in the hands of a subcommittee, delaying any definitive action for at least another six months.

The Casablanca Summit recognized, loud and clear, the State of Palestine. Furthermore, it approved and supported the Palestinian peace plan as well as recent Palestinian breakthroughs. It also rejected Israel's recent "local elections" plan.

Actually, not only did Egypt return to the Arab fold in the Casablanca Summit, but Morocco returned as well. In the past three years, and since King Hassan II's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the Moroccan government had focused its inetrests on associating itself with the European Economic Community. The government of King Hassan II had veered from collective Arab interests and traditional Islamic issues. Priority was given to the "Grand Maghreb" idea. But now the Moroccan king has returned to the "national Arab option."

Still Egypt's return after 10 years of ostracization was the most dramatic, and it made the Casablanca Summit Egypt's summit. President Husni Mubarak came to Morocco in force, and contrary to expectations, attracted all sorts of attention. This historic return links the once



The states of the Arab League.

incongruous Egyptian-Israeli peace with the new world environment. The Egyptian role is pressing to take advantage of this new environment. Egypt sees the Arab-Israeli conflict as soluble on the basis of an equilibrium of interests, and the need for a unified Arab plan in coordination with other countries of the world.

It is important to note that the Palestinian *Intifadah* was a unifying factor among all the Arab countries, not only on the leadership level, but at the grassroots level as well. Thus, the Palestinian delegation exerted pressures for more Arab reconciliation and support.

Yasser Arafat was perhaps the most active and attractive leader inside the summit hall and behind the scenes. He conferred with most of the Arab delegation heads and contacted those whom he did not visit in their private quarters. In all his meetings with the Arab leaders, Arafat appeared at ease. One Palestinian delegation member said, "the Arab détente is the foremost imperative," adding "our case will not profit from any dispute between one Arab axis and another. We are now outside the game of axes, and our struggle has bypassed that to clear strategic options."

The Casablanca Summit left more than one Arab-Arab problem unsettled. Most important among these are the Iraqi-Syrian dispute, and the Egyptian-Sudanese split.

The reconciling Palestinian role in the summit vindicated the Palestinian plan of action, and linked the Arab peace concept with the Palestinian peace plan. It also bolstered the Palestinian struggle in the occupied homeland, and acknowledged the independence and privacy of the political Palestinian moves.

In this regard, the extraordinary Casablanca Summit has been a Palestinian peace summit, and the *Intifadah* has been the Palestinian people's gift: a force for Arab détente and reconciliation. □

INTERVIEW

The Arab Summit:

Transforming the Palestinian Peace Initiative into an Arab Peace Initiative

An Interview with Ahmed Abdul Rahman

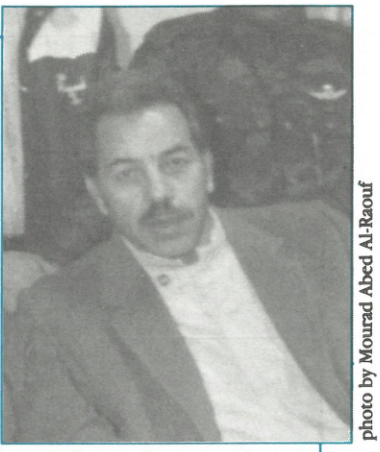


photo by Mourad Abed Al-Raouf

Chief PLO Spokesman Ahmed Abdul Rahman.

A four-day Arab League summit held in Casablanca, Morocco, concluded on May 26. The summit was attended by all 22 Arab countries except Lebanon. At the summit, the Arab heads of state readmitted Egypt to the Arab League, adopted a Palestinian working paper on peace efforts, and set up a committee of three heads of state to oversee an attempt to find a political solution to the ongoing war between factions in Lebanon.

Bishara A. Babbah, editor-in-chief of The Return, *interviewed Chief PLO Spokesman Ahmed Abdul Rahman, who attended the summit, to find out more about its results.*

Q: What was the outcome of the Arab summit on issues relating to the Palestine question?

The Arab summit gave a clear mandate to President Yasser Arafat to continue with his political offensive. Syria, which has long opposed such Palestinian initiatives, withdrew its objections and supported the Palestinian political initiative. The Arab summit, therefore, transformed the Palestinian initiative into an Arab initiative.

When in November and December of last year, the Palestinian political initiative was being formulated, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir attempted to belittle it by stating that the Arabs were not behind the initiative. Now that they are, I wonder whether Shamir will change his fierce objection to it.

Of all the Arab countries, only Libya did not support the Palestinian political initiative.

Q: What steps were taken by the Arab summit to support the Palestinian *Intifadah*?

The Arab summit reaffirmed its commitment, which was originally made during the last Arab summit in Algiers, to extend $128 million in aid to help support the *Intifadah*. The summit also decided to allocate $43 million, on a monthly basis, for that same purpose.

Q: Has the PLO received any of those funds yet?

Not yet. However, the Palestinian leadership will carry out the necessary contacts to ensure the transfer of these funds.

Q: On the diplomatic level, what decisions were taken to capitalize on the gains of the *Intifadah*?

A committee was set up headed by King Hassan of Morocco. The members of that committee will be agreed upon between King Hassan and President Yasser Arafat. The committee's objective will be to lobby the international community, particularly permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, for support for the Palestinian political initiative.

A decision was also taken to intensify the cooperation and coordination between Arab countries that border Israel, namely, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon.

Q: What is the current status of Syrian-PLO ties?

Presidents Arafat and Hafez Al-Assad of Syria held two meetings to iron out the differences that existed between them. During the summit, Syria supported the PLO's political initiative. A decision was also taken to open channels of communication between the Palestinians and the Syrians in order to restore relations between the two.

A Palestinian delegation might travel, in the near future, to Syria in order to promote better ties.

Q: What about Lebanon, and how are the decisions regarding Lebanon going to affect the Palestinians living there?

There was an Arab consensus that the solution in Lebanon should be an Arab solution. The main vehicle for that solution should be through diplomatic means, at least, for the coming 6 months. After the 6-month period, if the diplomatic means do not lead to a solution of the Lebanese problem, then the Arab League will call for another Arab summit to decide on a new course of action that could involve sending Arab peacekeeping troops to Lebanon.

We support the national integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. As President Arafat stated in his address to the Arab summit, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon is a temporary presence imposed by Israel's occupation of our land. The Palestinians have no designs on Lebanon. Our only objective now is to ensure the protection of our refugee camps within complete respect of Lebanese sovereignty. □

file photo

A Palestinian demonstration in a West Bank village calling for an end to Israel's occupation.

A Look Ahead:

The Future State of Palestine

Hisham Sharabi

The resolutions passed by the Palestine National Council in November 1988, recognizing Israel and calling for a two-state solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, hardly satisfy the minimum demands of either side, it answers neither all of Israel's security needs nor the Palestinians' full claim to justice.

It is only the so-called moderates on both sides who today support the idea of a two-state solution and seek to make what seems unacceptable acceptable. Who are these moderates, and is their moderation likely to achieve anything?

To Be a Moderate

In itself, moderation is often a mystifying word and has meaning only when placed in a concrete context. But in the present situation, when we put the moderation of Palestinian and Israeli moderates in context, we discover a subtle but profound discrepancy between the two positions. This appears most clearly in their frequently contradictory expectations and in the largely insubstantial results of their discussions—discussions which usually begin with great interpersonal warmth but often end, because of a lack of meaningful progress, in feelings of frustration, mistrust, and even hostility. One reason for this outcome is the desire of the Palestinian side to remember and the desire of the Israeli side to forget.

I know moderation through direct experience. For like many Palestinians in this country, I had to be "moderate" to be heard, that is, to be allowed to tell our side of the story. Our American friends showed us by example the language we needed to speak, and how to be

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Hisham Sharabi is Omar Al-Mukhtar Professor of History at Georgetown University and editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies. *This article is based on Dr. Sharabi's keynote speech at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Studies' 14th Annual Symposium held on May 4 and 5, 1989.*

reasonable and credible. This meant, above all, restricting our discourse to the practicalities of the present and always refraining from dredging up the past. What was the point in talking about 1948, about the dispossession, expulsion, exile, and suffering of the Palestinians when the Jews could talk about the Holocaust?

I was so "moderate" in those years that the copy editor of a book I was then writing complained that the section on the Palestinians lacked proper historical background. I had to rewrite that section by dipping less cautiously into the forbidden past, and tell how the Jewish minority in Palestine, composed mostly of recent immigrants, drove out the majority of Palestinians from their homes and land, and forcibly prevented their return after the war, despite the appeals of the international community and repeated resolutions by the United Nations.

Only now, with the coming of the *Intifadah*, is talking fully about the past possible. The Palestinians, like feminists and blacks, can talk about themselves without fear or self-imposed censorship, largely because they too have found the right way to rebel against injustice.

In the last few years, our moderation has been sorely tested by the way terrorism has been used against the Palestinians as an ideological weapon. Ironically, we found ourselves in the situation where, in Franz Werfel's words (used to describe the persecution of Jews decades ago): "the victim, not the murderers, [was] guilty." Suddenly experts on terrorism sprung up everywhere, writing articles and books on terrorism. And they were treated by the media and the intellectual establishment as serious academic experts. Conferences on terrorism were held, at which members of the Reagan administration, such as former Secretary of State George Shultz and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jean Kirkpatrick, not only attended but passionately participated.

Like many Palestinians in this country, I had to be "moderate" to be heard, that is, to be allowed to tell our side of the story.

In retrospect, it becomes clear that what Henry Kissinger, and later Shultz and other government officials, had aimed at by developing the terrorism theme was to delegitimize the Palestine Liberation Organization, the only political expression of Palestinian national rights. The Palestine problem could then be dealt with, not as a national problem, but one of refugees to be settled by agreement with the Arab states.

For most Third World intellectuals, racism remains largely abstract until it touches their lives directly. This happened in our confrontation with the terrorism problem. It was difficult at first to understand how responsible public figures and the mainstream media could use language which implicitly linked a whole people to terrorism.

But there was another reason for our moderate orientation besides wanting our voices to be heard: realism. We now were convinced that the time was past when Palestinian rights could be retrieved by force, even if the Arab states were able to radically change the balance of power and willing to take on Israel in a full-scale war. If it was possible in the 1950s, or even in 1967 to reconquer the ancestral land taken from us by force, it was no longer so after the 1967 war. The world, including the Soviet Union, would from then on not allow a return to the *status quo ante*.

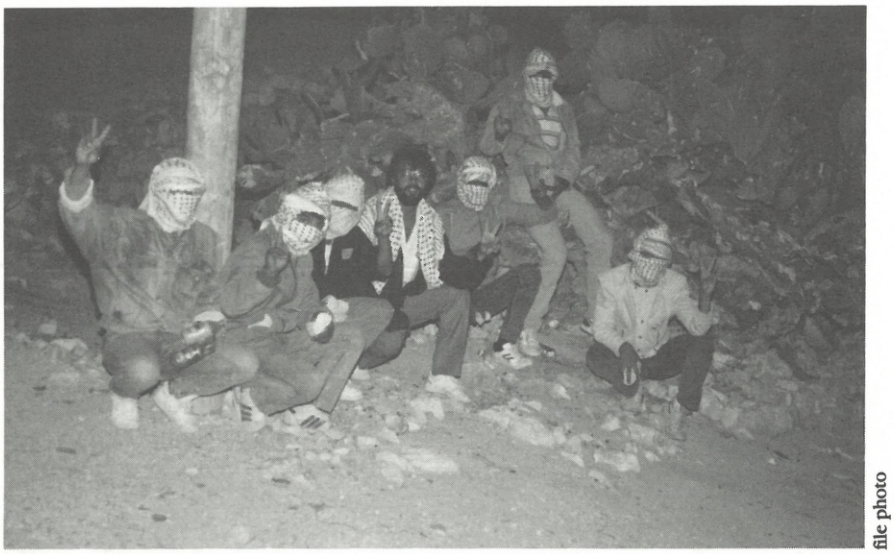
Options for a Solution

After four decades of Israeli domination, Palestine had become as much home to a new generation of Israelis as it had been to the Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. Nearly 60 percent of Israelis knew no other homeland besides Israel/Palestine. Only a political solution based on partition was now possible.

Such a solution has now been made legitimate by the *Intifadah*, which converted the dream of a Palestinian revolution into reality. In December 1987, the *Intifadah* transformed the "armed struggle" from the outside into genuine internal resistance. Like similar uprisings of the colonial era, by devising its own methods of resistance, the *Intifadah* has been able to blunt the occupier's military superiority and to reduce the balance of forces to a test of wills, the political outcome of which the next few months will reveal.

Let us recall that today the number of Palestinians living in historic Palestine (Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza) is fast approaching the 3 million figure, or half the total Palestinian population inside and outside historic Palestine. The number of Israeli Jews is about 3.5 million. At the present rate of Palestinian births and decline in Jewish immigration and increase in Jewish emigration, the ratio will, in the foreseeable future, be close to 40 percent to 60 percent, in favor of the Palestinians—that is, unless mass expulsion of Palestinians is carried out, in the manner of the expulsion of Jews from Germany in the 1930s before the concentration camps and the gas chambers.

But the idea of forcing the Palestinians across the border is not new. As a recent article by Israel Shahak in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* shows, the idea of "transfer" has a long history in Zionist circles



file photo

A Palestinian Strike Force, one of many, in the forefront of fighting Israeli occupation.

and is today openly discussed as one effective way of solving the so-called "demographic problem."

Another possibility, discussed less openly, is "mass liquidation." This chilling possibility was brought to the Knesset floor by Mapam member of Knesset Yair Tsaban, who put it this way:

> I don't sleep well at night because of my worry that if we let things go on at this pace—political hardening and brutalization, repression, and escalation of the *Intifadah*—it follows that we will find ourselves in more and more difficult situations, and we may very soon see developments which will end in mass killings, and it is necessary to say this from this platform. We have already seen things in the world, and if this happens—the tears among us will go right down to the root. Israeli society will be torn [apart]. . . .

Expulsion and more killing of Palestinians loom as possible eventualities if the present inflexible "live and let die" policy continues. Some Israeli writers have compared the present situation in Palestine to that of the Jews in Germany between 1933 and 1940, with similar implications for the future. The following quotation is from an interview carried by the Israeli daily *Haaretz* with Professor Amos Funkenstein, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tel Aviv, who describes himself as a "zealous Zionist." Professor Funkenstein compares the German government's attitude toward the Jews with that of the Israeli government toward the Palestinians.

> Between 1933 and 1937, up to the *Kristallnacht*, the situation of the Jews in Germany was in some respects better than that of the Arabs in the territories. In other respects, their condition was worse, but overall, the resemblance is remarkable. In the first place, both the Jews in Germany and the Palestinians in the territories were "subjects" denied citizenship. Still, the Jews of Germany had at that time more lawful options they could pursue than the inhabitants of the territories. A Jew there in 1936 did not feel totally outlawed. Only in 1938 the Nazis broke into their homes and staged pogroms on the scale resembling ours. Generally, it was harder than here to subvert the legal order in Germany. The Nazis had to contend with the legacy of the Weimar Republic, and it took several years to destroy it. It is true that Germany in the end exterminated the Jews. But this became an actual policy only in 1940, under the seemingly apocalyptic conditions of "total war." It is also true that the Jews of Germany never resisted and never started civil revolt. They were peaceful citizens, well integrated into German society. Their "problem" existed only in anti-Semitic minds. . . . It occurred to nobody that elderly Arabs ordered to remove the roadblocks from the streets are like the Jews of Vienna, whom the Nazis right after entering the city forced to sweep the snow. . . .
>
> Israel is a society that feels threatened and develops paranoias. Here the analogy with German society after Versailles is striking. The talk about "the whole world (being) against us" or about "being stabbed in the back" was customary there.

Another leading Israeli intellectual, Professor Yeshayahu Lebowitz, sees the situation as having already reached a turning point. He maintains that Israel must now decide which way it will go. In his own words, "The result of any stand-off will be absolutely certain destruction of the State of Israel, because the Arab world can't be destroyed. Israel can. Today we have power: tomorrow we won't."

So what is the way out? The formula for peace has been outlined, the whole world seems agreed on it, if only the two sides would bring themselves to accept a solution based on partial, not comprehensive, justice, and to put their hidden agendas aside. Professor Yehoshafat Harkabi's statement in the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, approvingly published in Arabic in the PLO weekly, *Sawt Al-Bilad*, last February, spells this out quite clearly:

> The main feature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that one cannot convince the Palestinians that Haifa and Jaffa are not part of Palestine, and one cannot persuade the Jews that Judea and Samaria are not part of Greater Israel. . . .
>
> The Palestinians believe that the Israelis do not need a state, and the Israelis are convinced that the Palestinians should be satisfied with autonomy. . . .

So the question becomes, how can peace based on partition be achieved?

Harkabi's answer is "By making a clear distinction between political reality and ideology." On the political level, the Palestinians as well as the Israelis will have to accept a truncated homeland—or as the Palestinian-Israeli writer Anton Shammas has put it, "to trade the homeland of the mind for a narrow state underfoot." They will still cherish the idea of a single homeland on the ideological-emotional level. If this could be done, would it then be inconceivable that in some future time, some kind of political arrangement might be reached whereby Jews could live in Ramallah or Hebron, and Palestinians in Haifa or Jaffa, without bitterness or hostility?

This vision clearly outstrips current reality—Israel refuses to acknowledge Palestinian nationhood and the Palestinians insist on an independent, sovereign state—but it nevertheless lights up possibilities for the future to which we, mired in present brutality, are often not very sensitive. Here, the term "vision" underscores the distance separating a realistic settlement from the unattainable dreams of expansion or liberation, the Israeli dream of a Greater Israel, more or less empty of Palestinians, and the Palestinian dream of restoring an undiminished Palestine.

One can say that while the Palestinians have now begun to move away from this dream, the majority of Israelis have not. Earlier this year, Salah Khalaf, a leading PLO figure, in a dramatic videotaped address to an Israeli-Arab symposium in Jerusalem, put the new Palestinian position this way:

> In the past we believed that this land is ours alone, and we did not believe the idea of coexistence between two states. . . . [Today] I address you and say to you that the Algiers resolutions, and Arafat's statements at the press conference in Geneva, reflect the heartfelt convictions of every Palestinian. . . . Some people wonder whether this coexistence is only a first step. We answer, no. We want a definitive settlement. But a definitive settlement will only come if peace is first. . . . The important thing is that the two peoples, the Palestinian and the Israeli, come to believe in the necessity of coexistence between two states.

So, for the Palestinians now the position is: If Palestine cannot be repossessed perhaps it can be recreated in a new form. This, in my view, is the import of the historic resolutions of the nineteenth Palestine National Council: Trading the dream of total liberation for the palpable reality of a narrow state. That this radical change in PLO policy will induce a similar change in the Israeli position is, unfortunately, by no means certain. At least, it hasn't so far.

Moving toward peace calls for an enormous effort. War often seems so much simpler. Recall that when, in 1973, perhaps the greatest opportunity for a comprehensive Middle East peace since 1948 presented itself, it was destroyed by Henry Kissinger's policy of dividing the Arabs—by sponsoring partial agreements between Israel and some Arab neighbors resolving the easier issues, while leaving the major issue of the Palestinians untouched.

This was made possible because Kissinger, as U.S. secretary of state, enjoyed the full backing of the American-Jewish leadership and its allies in Congress. The same could happen again, in perhaps a somewhat different manner, under the Bush administration. Since Kissinger, except for a fleeting moment during the Carter administration, the United States has, in Arab eyes, appeared to be more part of the problem than part of the solution.

Shamir's Local Elections Proposal

It is noteworthy that even before Shamir's visit to Washington in April, Yitzhak Rabin, the defense minister, told a group of visitors, according to the Tel-Aviv daily *Yediot Abronot*, that "the Americans are well content now, they do not look for any solution in the Middle East, and they will leave us quiet, at least for a year. The inhabitants of the territories are under a heavy military and political pressure. . . . At the end they will be broken, and will themselves put pressure on Arafat to enable them to negotiate by themselves with Israel."

Already the euphoria created by the Algiers resolutions and the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue seems to be dissipating. The Bush administration, exhibiting little desire to build on the recent breakthroughs, seems more inclined to pursue a policy of wait-and-see. But the practical effect of such a policy is shelving the idea of an international conference, around which there already exists virtual world consensus, and favoring what Rabin sees as leaving Israel alone, at least for a year. Thus the peace process, instead of leaping ahead under the new administration, is now bogged down by the question of elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It would be justifiable to think, therefore, that by accepting Shamir's proposal, the Bush administration seems to have implicitly agreed to give Israel a little more

time to contain the Uprising and thus to recreate the kind of framework best suited to the kind of solution deemed acceptable by the present Israeli leadership, namely, some form of local autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

However, there are two things of which we can be reasonably certain concerning the immediate future. The first is that so long as Israel is ruled by the present rightwing leadership, there seems little likelihood of an early move toward a settlement of the Palestinian question. Mr. Shamir and his colleagues will continue to find ways to deflect any genuine attempt at reaching a peace agreement, so long as he and his collaborators feel secure that the United States will not seriously oppose what they do, provided that it is done successfully.

But secondly, Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip cannot go on forever. Palestinian popular resistance will continue, and Israel's occupation will end. The only question is when and how the occupation will be terminated, and at what price to the Palestinian community in lives and further suffering.

Building a Free and Democratic State

The Palestinians have it in their power, if they consciously so decide, to build a true democracy in the Arab World. They have learned, particularly since the *Intifadah*, that liberation is not something to be won all at once at the end of struggle. They know that it is achieved gradually in the course of struggle, and that it takes root slowly in the everyday relations between people before it is embodied in the formal structures and institutions of the state.

Ironically, this is the same kind of dream cherished by the early Zionists not so long ago! But the difference is that while the Zionist dream has remained largely a dream, the Palestinian dream seems already half realized. Few communities in similar circumstances have what the Palestinians already enjoy. They are engaged in a successful national struggle, one which is unique both in the extent to which it has mobilized practically every single member of the society, including women and children, and in the original, highly effective, non-lethal weapon it has invented to achieve its independence.

In retrospect, it becomes clear that what Henry Kissinger, and later Shultz and other government officials, had aimed at by developing the terrorism theme was to delegitimize the Palestine Liberation Organization, the only political expression of Palestinian national rights.

Today the Palestinians enjoy the warm support of almost all the peoples and governments of the world. They have a homogeneous community on the ground. They have to displace no one in order to build their state, only to free themselves. The Palestinian community is, furthermore, unified in its cultural traditions and deeply rooted in its ancestral land. As a people, the Palestinians form a cohesive society in which the power of the former landed families has disintegrated in the process of national struggle. Today, there are relatively few class differences among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where over the past 20 years the gap between rich and poor has greatly narrowed, and most farmers own their land.

Palestinians also enjoy one of the highest levels of literacy in the Third World. There are more Palestinian university graduates per capita than there are Israeli university graduates. Under the occupation, the Palestinians have succeeded in building their own independent institutions, despite limited material resources and relentless Israeli suppression. This includes, in the educational field, several universities and colleges, vocational centers, research institutes and elementary and high schools; in health care, a health system with several hospitals, clinics, and emergency service stations in camps and villages; and, in the field of self-help organizations, workers and farm cooperatives, and several unions of workers, women, and students.

All this will enrich Palestinian civil society and the development of organizations and institutions that will be independent of the state and its direct control. During the last 40-odd years, Palestinian cultural life has also flourished, particularly in the plastic arts, drama, and the theater. Perhaps most importantly, Palestine today is the only territory in the Arab World where women can be said to have achieved a large degree of liberation—not through men's action but by their own struggle.

Thus all the makings for an exemplary free and democratic state are there. On day one of independence, the Palestinians could inaugurate a society well on the road to modernity, a state that could be a living example to a part of the world where fundamentalism and patriarchy now threaten to bury the future in new forms of despotic structures. Here, sober development, based on agriculture and light industry, propelled by the intelligence and skills of a highly educated people, would displace

file photo

House demolitions: a price Palestinians are forced to pay for resisting Israel's occupation.

the consumerism and mindless model of waste and ecological destructiveness characteristic of most of the surrounding countries.

In the last two decades, progressive thinking in the Arab World has shifted from the revolutionary model to the model of democracy. As in many post-colonial countries, the goal of revolution is no longer viable, for wherever revolution has occurred it has led not to freedom but to authoritarianism and neopatriarchy. As the goal of political struggle, democracy is now seen in three concrete objectives: human rights, civil rights, and self-determination. The Palestinian Uprising, in embodying these objectives, foreshadows the shape of the future Arab struggle. If human rights, civil rights, and democratic liberties can be realized in the Palestinian state, what will prevent their realization across the Arab World?

But even dreams with strong roots in reality can founder. This can happen in Palestine unless the opportunity to make ready from now the proper conditions for the implementation of this dream is seized and consciously acted upon. Clearly the time for building Palestinian democracy is right now, by making conscious and articulate the values and goals of the new society, and by preparing the ground for their incorporation in the structures of an eventual state. Hence the need for the existing apparatuses of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take from now the necessary measures to implement those reforms that will enable the Palestinians to start building their democratic state. This would seal the triumph of the *Intifadah*.

But for the Uprising to be genuinely reflected in the external administration of Palestinian affairs, there is no alternative to the radial transformation of the existing bureaucratic and political structures. Even if only minimum reform, not a full *Intifadah*, is carried out outside, a major step will have been taken toward securing a basis in democracy for the future Palestinian state.

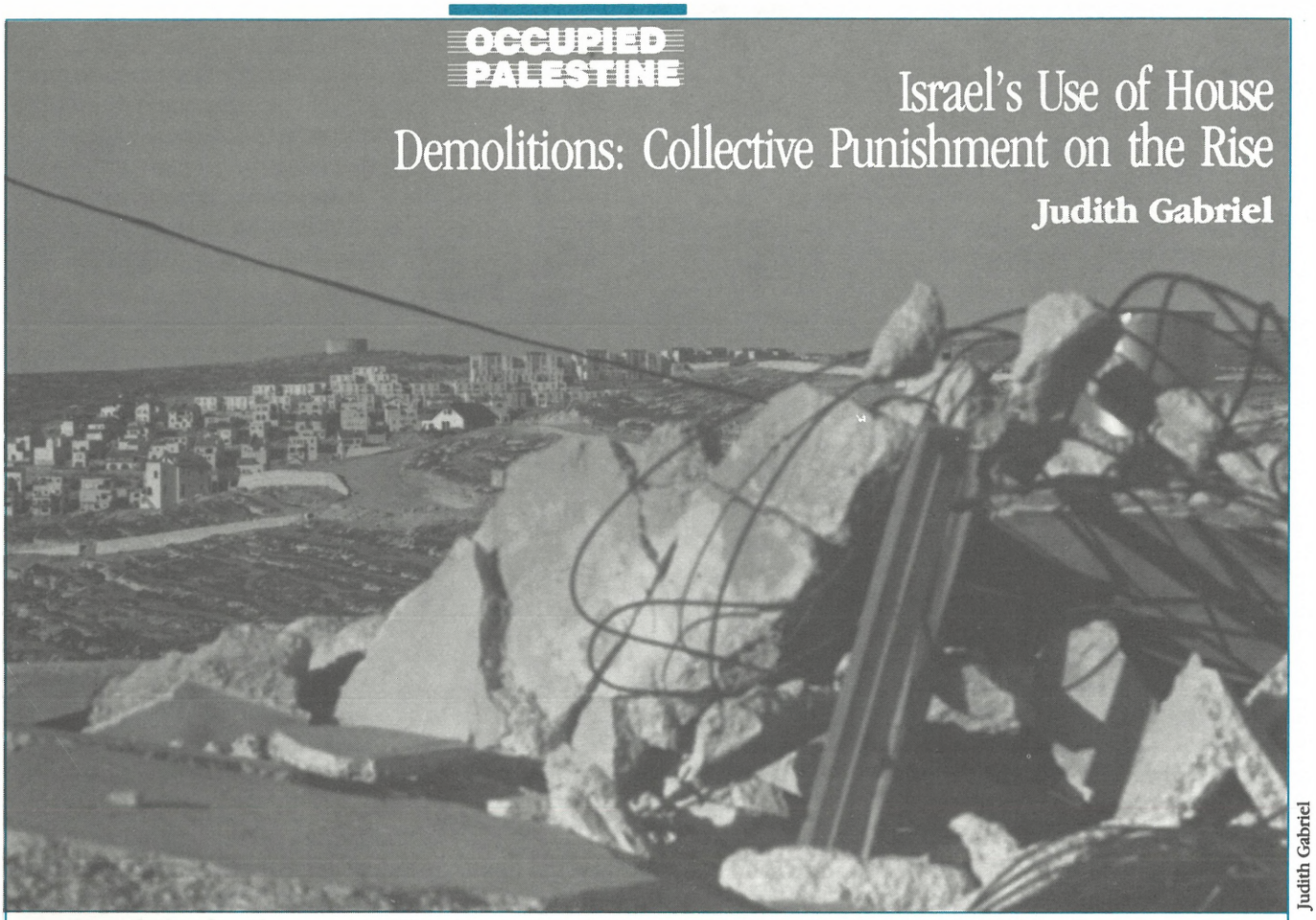
Palestinian intellectuals at home and abroad have a special role to play in preventing the kind of post-independence disaster that we have seen happening in many Third World countries after independence. In this phase, they form the group best equipped to do what is most needed: To provide the true image of what a Palestinian state would look like, and to work out the means for its transformation into reality. Their duty would be to maintain a critical stance vis-ā-vis the Arab and Palestinian status quo and to uphold the values of freedom and democracy in the face of regressive currents and movements.

In the end, what is to be gained from creating a Palestine in which a combination of poverty and repression would eventually lead to fundamentalism? If intellectuals accept the role of apologists and propagandists they will contribute little to the ongoing struggle and will only strengthen the forces of reaction. As responsible critics and specialists in their various fields, on the other hand, they can be a material force protecting the achievements of the people's struggle and paving the ground for the flowering one day of a functioning democracy in Palestine. □

OCCUPIED PALESTINE

Israel's Use of House Demolitions: Collective Punishment on the Rise

Judith Gabriel



Judith Gabriel

A well-maintained Israeli settlement, on the West Bank, standing in the shadow of a demolished Palestinian house.

It is difficult to remain unmoved at the scene of a recently destroyed house, resembling as it does an aerial bombing—with stunned families picking through the ruins of their homes, trying to salvage housewares and clothing for their new life in makeshift tents.

—Israel's War By Bureaucracy: "We'll Blow Your House Down"

In the last 18 months, thousands of Palestinians have become refugees—some for the second or third time—as the Israeli army attempts to tackle the Uprising with bulldozers and dynamite. In lots across occupied Palestine, where once a number of homes had stood, wrecking crews have left tangled piles of rubble.

Judith Gabriel is a freelance journalist and photographer. She produces a biweekly radio program in Los Angeles called Middle East in Focus.

The number of house demolitions has increased sharply since the onset of the *Intifadah*. In 1988 alone, according to the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, more than 550 homes housing almost 5,000 people were destroyed. The *Jerusalem Post*, on March 15, 1989, described the increase as "part of a bureaucratic crackdown aimed at stifling attempts to organize civil disobedience."

One-third of the houses destroyed in 1988 were demolished in reprisal for vague "security" offenses, the remaining two-thirds because they were "illegally" built —that is, without military issued construction permits. However, these permits are almost impossible to secure under occupation. Homes have also been demolished on the official pretext that the land was needed to build roads to a Jewish settlement, or because the owner had not paid taxes.

But whatever the pretext, house demolitions are widely condemned as a brutal form of collective punishment, one that purposely and maliciously hits at the dynamic vortex of Palestinian life, the family.

Not only are the former homeowners left without shelter, but they are powerless to do anything but stand outside their homes and watch as their lifework goes up in smoke. Palestinians invest generations of work and money in their homes. Many homes are handed down from generation to generation, usually built by hand by those living inside, or by previous generations who had also lived there.

One Palestinian whose home had recently been demolished lamented that—

> The house is the entire history of a family, blown up under the explosion of a few seconds. . . . [I]t is our memory, our tradition that they want to destroy.

In addition to being a form of collective punishment, Palestinians fear that the policy of demolishing homes is part and parcel of a pervasive move to oust Palestinians from their homes whenever possible—a continuation of a pattern of destruction that began in 1948, when entire villages were razed, and the native residents made refugees.

Since the early days of the occupation, the Israeli military has destroyed or sealed thousands of Palestinian homes in retaliation for what it considered violent acts against the military. The practice intensified in 1985 with the imposition of the "Iron Fist"—a policy of getting rough with those who opposed the occupation. Another wave of dramatic increases in house demolitions washed over the West Bank during the first year of the Uprising.

Today, Palestinians can have their homes demolished simply for being accused—no trial, proof, or conviction needed—of "security offenses." Security offenses can include anything from maintaining "terrorist bases" and killing suspected collaborators, to throwing rocks. In early 1989, the Israeli army began to seal off or blow up homes of families whose children were accused of throwing stones at soldiers.

George P. Fletcher, a professor at Columbia University Law School, wrote—

> The aim is not to stop the immediate stone throwing; catching the suspect does that. [The point of the policy is to] punish the child so that neither he nor his cohorts will be inclined to throw stones in the future . . . it testifies to creeping anarchism in the government's effort to cope with the most committed uprising in recent history.

Because of its harshness, Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes is vigorously protested by the international community, but it is just as vigorously defended by the Israeli army. They claim that it is a deterrent against resistance, even finding justification in the very international law which critics of the policy point to in their protests against it. The Geneva Convention of 1949 bars an occupying power from destroying real or personal property "except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."

In 1988 alone, according to the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, more than 550 homes housing almost 5,000 people were destroyed.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) interprets that last section to require that a demolition be "materially indispensable . . . for the armed forces to engage in action." It does not justify destruction for purposes of reprisal or deterrence, according to the ICRC, the very purposes the international law was created to prevent.

In another article, the Geneva Convention deals specifically with collective punishment:

> No protected person may be punished for an offense he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.

In its official response to the U.S. State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights*, Israel cited a supreme court ruling in a case involving a house-sealing. The court acknowledged that members of the families of suspects, are likely to suffer, but added that the sanction was—

> surely not for the purpose of punishing them, but for the purpose of deterring those who disturb the order, and who by their conduct cause serious and fatal injuries to others who are also innocent.

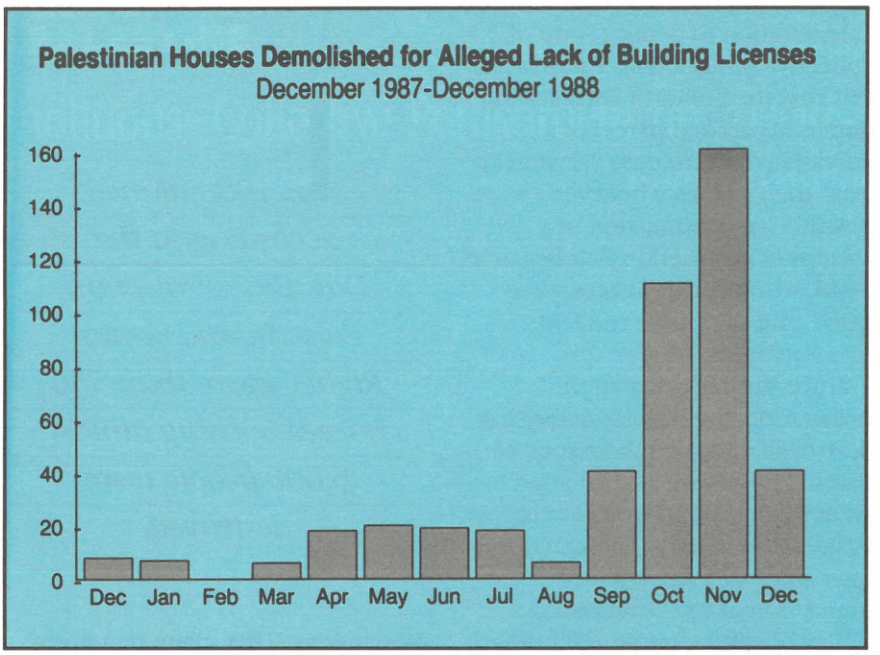
Notwithstanding that rationale, the measure has been condemned by several Western nations, including the United States, as well as international human rights organizations. All agree that Israel's policy of demolishing houses is illegal under international law since it requires only the signature of the military commander to be carried out. No trial is needed, and many houses have been destroyed even when there has been no arrest, or when no injury resulted from the alleged actions of any residents.

While homeowners have the right to appeal to the Israeli supreme court, the court has generally rejected appeals on the matter, upholding the occupation authorities' arguments that the violent dismantling of homes is somehow necessary for "state security." In Gaza, residents have been allowed to appeal to the military commander, and some of these orders have been changed. But in the West Bank, homes have been routinely demolished with no opportunity to appeal.

In one unprecedented exception in November 1988, the court did block the demolition of seven houses in Bethlehem. Instead, the houses were ordered sealed, the doors welded shut and covered with corrugated metal, and the windows filled in with concrete.

Aside from its reprisal function, the Israeli army also uses the threat of house demolition in pursuit of wanted "security offenders," including youths and children suspected of throwing stones.

One late afternoon in March 1989, the Israeli army tried to "persuade" the families of Burqin, a village near Jenin in the West Bank,



to turn in their fugitive sons. The soldiers blew up four homes, leaving six families homeless. Attorney Felicia Langer, who represented the families in a petition demanding that those responsible be brought to trial said, "It's like hostage taking."

The actual act of demolishing a house takes place against a backdrop that is in itself a small siege. Hundreds of soldiers suddenly converge on a village, often late at night. People are given as little as 10 minutes in which to empty the house of its contents. Sometimes, the only warning is a bang on the door with a command to evacuate immediately. The military reasoning behind this "sneak attack" is to forestall any demonstrations which might arise.

In the village of Idna, known as a center of protest, on the very day that a two-week siege was lifted, allowing the youths of the village to leave for their jobs, 15 houses marked for demolition were destroyed. While the youths were away at work, the Israeli bulldozers came in and tore down the houses.

In some cases, Israeli troops have offered to "assist" the family remove the contents, ripping curtains off windows and scattering foodstuffs on the ground outside the doomed home. Even then, the furnishings often languish as anachronistic relics on the rubble-strewn land. At the site of one flattened home in Beita, a refrigerator sat as a mute and useless monument outside a tent in driving rain.

A young man sitting in front of those ruins in Beita recalled the blast which destroyed his family's shelter and fortunes.

> I'll never forget that moment. My mother had to watch helplessly as her whole life caved-in. My father had spent 25 years building that house, adding one room every five years. After the dust had settled, all we could see was piles of broken stone and twists of crumpled steel.

As he spoke, he kicked at a jagged shard of blue-and-white kitchen tile, lying in the dirt.

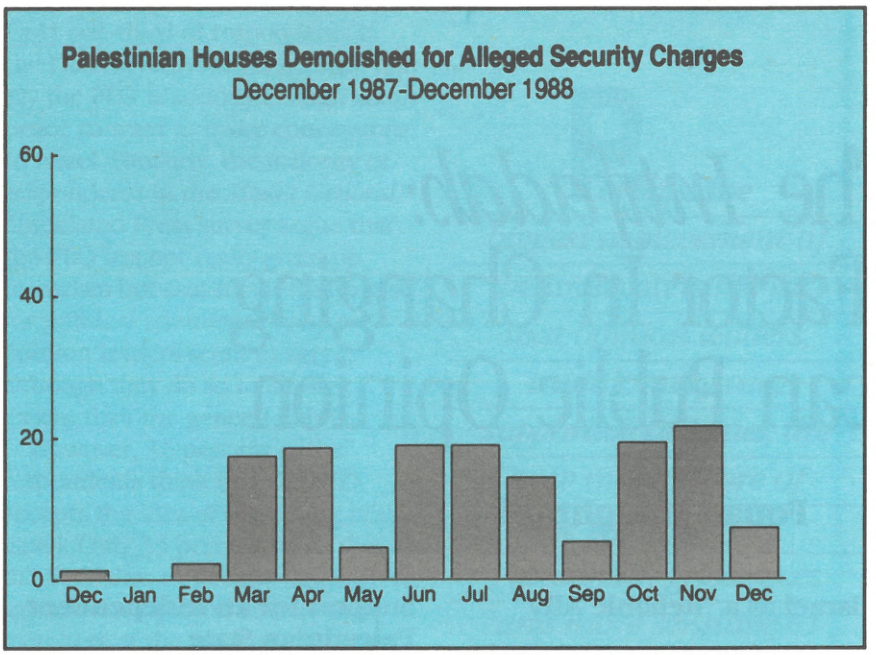
There are several other such forlorn sites in Beita, the village that was thrust into international awareness in April 1988, after an Israeli teenager was accidentally shot dead by a settler escort in a clash with village residents. Vindictive settlers immediately called for the entire village to be "razed to the ground" before the army had even concluded its investigation. Within two days, 14 Beita homes were blasted. Another 21 homes were damaged by the explosion, eight of them left uninhabitable.

Not only do Palestinians live under the threat of having their homes demolished by military order, they also live in the shadow of "fallout" damage to their buildings, animals, and crops when a neighbor's home is felled. That anxiety is heightened during curfews.

In one instance in the village of Beit Ummar near Hebron, a house was destroyed during a curfew. The power of the explosion severely damaged a neighbor's house, and the family feared the entire structure would cave in on them. But they did not dare go outside, fearing they would be shot for breaking curfew.

Once it is demolished, for "security" reasons no one is allowed to rebuild a house. The newly homeless must make do in the small tents given them by international relief organizations, but these are often inadequate shelter from the weather. The winter of 1988-89 was unusually cold and wet. In July 1988 citing "security reasons," Israeli troops confiscated the very tent provided by the ICRC after a family's house was demolished.

Palestinians are a people for



whom the tents of early refugees had become a symbol of an already tragic history. Whereas most of the *Intifadah*-related house demolitions in the West Bank were in villages, in Gaza, more than half of the houses demolished or sealed were in refugee camps, leaving hundreds without a roof over their heads for a second or third time. Wherever the home is situated, its destruction places an additional strain on the rest of the community as homeless families are absorbed into other already-strained households.

Particularly for children, the experience of having one's home destroyed before one's very eyes is deeply traumatic. A young Beita mother worries that her children are still having nightmares, more than a year after their home was blasted. "They still jump at any loud noises," she said. "We have to talk very quietly, very gently around them." Their physical health also suffers. One Palestinian journalist reported that children living in makeshift relief tents were turning blue from the cold of an unseasonably bitter winter—all because an older brother or cousin may have been wanted for throwing stones.

Since the onset of the *Intifadah*, there has been a sharp rise in the number of homes demolished, not because of a family member's inclination to hurl stones, but because the structure was built without the sanction of a military-issue construction license. Palestinians say the escalation is further proof of the punitive nature of the demolition policy.

In the first 15 months of the Uprising, a total of 672 unlicensed houses were demolished, according to statistics gathered by *Al-Haq*, the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists. During the *Intifadah*, no housing licenses were issued at all in occupied Palestine, and even before, such official sanction was hard to come by.

Palestinian homes inside the "green line," i.e., inside Israel itself, have been destroyed for the same reasons. More than 7,000 Palestinian-owned homes have been designated as "illegally built" and thus subject to demolition.

Despite the devastating impact of being rendered homeless in the violence of a deliberate ravaging of one's home, despite the hardships it imposes on the newly created refugees, the tactic of house demolition is seen by many as a sign of Israeli desperation.

Hand-hewn walls may be flattened in a matter of seconds, rooms which once echoed many generations of family life may be reduced to haunted dust, but the Palestinian reaction to house demolition is loud and clear. One day after two homes were destroyed this winter, graffiti appeared proclaiming, "Despite the demolition of homes, the Palestinian people will not die." □

Information about "adopting" a family whose home has been lost to demolition may be obtained from:

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign
220 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60604

Information about the Beita Relief Fund is available from:

Roots
703 G Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

For information about helping the victims of house demolitions contact:

The Jerusalem Fund
2435 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

The *Intifadah*: A Key Factor In Changing American Public Opinion

Fouad Moughrabi

The *Intifadah* has significantly changed some of America's attitudes toward Israel, toward the Palestinian people, and toward the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. At least eight major public opinion surveys conducted nationwide in 1988 confirm this conclusion. Since the beginning of 1989, at least five major surveys have been conducted by a variety of polling organizations. This makes the Palestinian-Israeli conflict one of the most heavily polled foreign policy issues in the United States.

The apparent shift in U.S. public opinion was a key factor in the U.S. State Department's decision in February of this year to issue a candid report on Israel's human-rights abuses in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the past, Israeli abuses of human rights were downgraded by the State Department in its annual survey of the issue. But now, even some congressional leaders, traditionally Israel's staunchest supporters, are concerned about the effect of Israel's policies of beating and killing Palestinian civilians.

What follows is a basic summary of the key findings of the major polls on American attitudes toward the Palestinians and Israel.

Fouad Moughrabi is a professor of Political Science at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He is coauthor of the book Public Opinion and the Palestine Question.

Israel as a "Reliable Ally"

A *Washington Post*-ABC News poll released on February 21, 1989 reveals that 56 percent of those polled do not consider Israel a reliable ally of the United States. Furthermore, 52 percent now have a negative view of Israel. These are the most negative ratings for Israel since the poll began asking questions about Israel some eight years ago.

Support for U.S.-PLO Talks

By an overwhelming majority, Americans approve of talks between the U.S. government and the PLO. A *Media General*/Associated Press survey of January 4-12, 1989, revealed that 67 percent of the American public is in favor of U.S.-PLO talks and only 17 percent are against. Similar results were obtained by a CBS News/*New York Times* poll taken January 12-15, 1989. Here again, the data reveal an interesting finding, namely that, as education level goes up, so does support for U.S.-PLO talks. For example, only 60 percent of high-school graduates favor U.S.-PLO talks while 76 percent of college graduates and 84 percent of those with post-graduate education favor such talks. In other words, opinion leaders tend to be more in favor of direct U.S.-PLO talks than the general public.

Support for an Independent Palestinian State

There is overwhelming support for a Palestinian state. The *Media General*/Associated Press survey asks specifically—"Should the Palestinians have their own country?" Sixty-two percent of the U.S. public say yes. Only 11 percent oppose and 27 percent do not know. And again, the better educated are more likely to favor a Palestinian state. Sixty-seven percent of college graduates and 71 percent of those whose income is over $50,000 also support it.

Support for Palestinian statehood has been steadily growing since October 1982, when a Gallup survey commissioned by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations first discovered a two-to-one majority who favor a Palestinian state. What is significant is that opinion leaders, traditionally quite supportive of Israel, now support Palestinian statehood by large numbers.

Curiously, however, more men than women favor the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The margin is significant, with 68 percent of men favoring it as opposed to only 57 percent of the women.

Readiness for Peace

The American public is confused about whether the PLO is genuinely interested in a peaceful settlement.

Only one-third of respondents in the CBS News/*New York Times* poll say the PLO is serious enough about peace to want to make concessions to Israel. Similarly, the majority of respondents in the *Media General*/Associated Press survey argue that the PLO has not really given up terrorism but that it is just saying so for political advantage. Even opinion leaders seem to agree, although they do so to a lesser extent than the general public.

However, 36 percent of the respondents think that the PLO accepts the idea of coexisting with Israel. Only 33 percent think that the PLO aims to destroy Israel. Here again, more opinion leaders than members of the mass public think the PLO would accept coexistence with Israel. Forty-five percent of college graduates and 55 percent of post graduates think the PLO wants coexistence. Only 28 percent and 29 percent, respectively, disagree. Forty-two percent of the men surveyed believe that the PLO wants coexistence, as opposed to only 29 percent of the women.

Nearly one-third of the respondents in the CBS News/*New York Times* poll think Israel is not serious enough about peace to make concessions to the PLO. Also, 44 percent of the respondents think that since the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist, Israel should give up the Occupied Territories, and it should allow the creation of a Palestinian state. Only 25 percent think that is a bad idea.

The numbers in favor of territorial compromise go up substantially among the more educated, with 52 percent of college graduates and 60 percent of post-graduates favoring a land-for peace formula. Similarly, 57 percent of the more affluent think Israel should give up the Occupied Territories and allow the creation of a Palestinian state. Only 21 percent are opposed.

U.S. Pressure on Israel

By and large, the American public does not favor sanctions against a country it perceives as an ally. Therefore, the majority of respondents—67 percent—do not think the United States should try to force Israel to negotiate with the PLO or threaten sanctions if Israel refuses. A majority prefers reducing aid rather than cutting it off altogether.

Asked if they "think pro-Israel groups in the United States have too much influence on U.S. policy, or too little, or about the right amount," slightly more respondents—35 percent—say they have too much influence, and 32 percent say they have the right amount.

Forty-four percent of opinion leaders say that pro-Israel groups have the right amount of influence on U.S. policy. More opinion leaders (44 percent of post graduates vs. 37 percent, and 38 percent of college graduates vs. 34 percent) think pro-Israel groups have too much influence on U.S. foreign policy. These figures are consistent with the results of an earlier survey done in April 1988 by Martilla and Kiley, a Boston research firm, on behalf of the American Jewish Congress.

Perhaps the biggest achievement of the Intifadah *is the fact that opinion leaders, traditionally very supportive of Israel, are now more aware of the legitimacy of Palestinian grievances and more sensitive to the Palestinian need for independence and statehood.*

Conclusions

The *Intifadah* has shaken the foundations of Israel's support within the American public. The question is whether these changes are temporary or whether they reflect a more structural change in American perceptions of the conflict and the actors.

The opinions of the general public are often ephemeral. Polls give us a snapshot of what various groups think at a particular moment. Thus, sympathy for Israel reached an all-time low of 32 percent in the aftermath of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the massacres at Sabra and Shatilla. Sympathy for Israel rebounded several years later as public memory of these events faded away. Will the same thing happen again?

It is difficult to predict whether pro-Israel sympathy will bounce back in a couple of years. However, one thing is certain: While the opinions of the general public may fluctuate depending on news coverage and events, it is unlikely that the opinions of the informed public or of opinion leaders will fluctuate as sharply. Perhaps the biggest achievement of the *Intifadah* is the fact that opinion leaders, traditionally very supportive of Israel, are now more aware of the legitimacy of Palestinian grievances and more sensitive to the Palestinian need for independence and statehood.

It is obviously important that the notion of a Palestinian state should no longer remain an abstract political formulation. It needs to be given flesh and blood. In other words, it should be presented as a vital human necessity for a people who suffer brutal occupation and exile. □

Democracy in the State of Palestine

Declaration of Independence
Palestine, the land of three monotheistic faiths, is
where the Palestinian Arab people was born, on which
it grew developed and excelled. The Palestinian people
was never separated from or diminished in its integral
bonds with Palestine. Thus the Palestinian Arab people
ensured for itself an everlasting union between itself, its
land and its history.
Resolute throughout that history, the Palestinian Arab
people forged its national identity, rising even to unimagined
levels in its defense, as invasion, the design of others, and
the appeal special to Palestine's ancient and luminous place
on that eminence where powers and civilizations are join-
e the people of
connection be-
or the land its
al genius.

drawing by Sabi Atteyih

Shukri B. Abed

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence, which was read by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Algiers on November 15, 1988, addresses the question of the type of regime in the independent Palestinian state. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence promises that the Palestinian people will enjoy full equality in rights and that in the state of Palestine they will be able to enjoy their collective national and cultural identity. Furthermore, the state will safeguard "their political and religious convictions and their human dignity by means of a parliamentary democratic system of governance, itself based on freedom of expression and the freedom to form parties. The rights of minorities will be duly respected by the majority, as minorities must abide by decisions of the majority. Governance will be based on principles of social justice, equality and nondiscrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, color, sex, under the aegis of a constitution which ensures the rule of law and the independent judiciary. Thus shall these principles allow no departure from Palestinians' age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious coexistence."

This sounds very much like the classical definition of democracy. In *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* democracy is defined as a country with a "government which encourages and allows rights of citizenship such as freedom of speech, religion, opinion, and association, the assertion of the rule of law, majority rule, accompanied by respect for the rights of minorities."

Judging, however, from the current situation in the 21 independent Arab states, where there exists not a single democratic parliamentary system in the sense described above, one can legitimately question whether such a statement represents more than wishful thinking. Once the Palestinian state has been established, will the dream of democracy evaporate as it unfortunately has in other Arab countries? Given the cultural resemblance between Palestine and other Arab countries, chances for the establishment and success of a democracy in Palestine would be slim. However, there may be a brighter side if the following factors are taken into consideration:

First: The decentralized Palestinian diaspora has inevitably resulted in the cultural diversity (and consequently different sociopolitical views) that only a democracy can reflect, contain, and tolerate.

Second: The internal structure of the PLO has evolved gradually toward parliamentary procedure for decisionmaking. For example, in the most recent PNC meetings that took place in Algiers last November, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Dr. George Habash, accepted U.N. Resolution 242, despite his personal opposition to it. Although factionalism is apparent within the PLO, such disagreements are inherent in every democratic structure. Under the circumstances created by the recent PNC decision to accept Resolution 242 and move away from its previous rigid stance, such factionalism is natural until Palestinians get used to the idea.

Third: Twenty-one years of occupation have brought Palestinians face-to-face with a democratic parliamentary system. Despite the fact that Israeli democracy does not apply to them, the Palestinians, particularly those of the younger generation, have observed the system operating within Israel and could form an idea of the values of living in a democratic system through daily contact with it (such as the right to appeal to the Israeli supreme court, a right that many Palestinians have used in order to protect themselves from what seemed to them arbitrary, unjust, and unfair treatment by their occupiers). The Palestinians resent their occupiers, but at the same time, they see the values of democracy for those to whom it applies, and probably will fight for

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file photo

Palestinian democracy in action at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers in November 1988.

the right to have democracy applied to them in their independent state. Both the younger generation, exposed to no other system, and the older generation, experiencing either the Jordanian monarchy or Egyptian administration, probably have come to prefer democracy — the younger for knowing its benefits and the older for enduring a nondemocratic system.

Fourth: The Palestinian Declaration of Independence explicitly asserts the democratic character of the future Palestinian state. Although a declaration of independence is not a constitution, it does provide the guidelines for the state's behavior and character.

Fifth: Palestinian elite groups, almost exclusively Western oriented, will probably not tolerate any other form of government in their future state. In fact, they would probably fight to achieve that purpose.

Sixth: Palestinians have come to realize that they cannot afford to alienate Western countries by creating a nondemocratic state, since a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be economically dependent on the outside world. They understand that Western countries would be less inclined to assist economic development if Palestine becomes a nondemocratic state.

Israelis have several reasons to support the establishment of a Palestinian democratic state. In contrast to any other form of government, a Palestinian democracy would be vastly more appealing to the Israelis and easier to coexist beside. This is not a proposition that involves a zero-sum game; such a solution would be good for Palestinians and Israelis alike. A democratic Palestinian state, like any democracy, would be more predictable and therefore would almost certainly add to the stability of the region. Many of the events in the Middle East are attributed (by the Israelis themselves) to the fact that countries surrounding Israel are ruled by one man, and therefore their moves cannot be predicted since they emanate from this man's perceptions and decisions. A democratic regime in the future Palestinian state will no doubt help eliminate the element of "surprise" or "unpredictability" that has so far characterized Middle East politics.

Formation of a democratic Palestinian state could directly promote peace throughout the Middle East. Not only would a democracy in Palestine be the best guarantee for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, but it would help Israeli democracy itself. Israeli democracy, freed from the divisive issue of what to do about the Palestinians, would have the time and resources to develop into a full-fledged democracy itself. Arab states, which have until now diverted a much of their energy toward the Palestinian question, could redirect their efforts to domestic or other regional concerns. A thriving Palestinian democracy could serve as a model of the first true Arab democratic state. □

ISRAEL'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Israel's Diplomatic Offensive in Africa

Jane Hunter

The African nations have always been especially attuned to the Palestinian cause, but today, in this crucial stage of the *Intifadah*, many African governments are moving to reestablish diplomatic relations with Israel. Kenya and the Central African Republic (CAR) have already done so, and Ethiopia is expected to follow suit this year.

In April, after months of rumors, hints, and denials, Nigeria's foreign minister said that Nigeria, often the political flagship of Africa, was "making some moves" to restore diplomatic ties with Israel. His words gave plausibility to Israeli reports that Ghana and Congo were establishing contacts for the same purpose. Senegal, Gabon, Guinea, and Equatorial Guinea are also frequently mentioned in Israel as candidates for renewed diplomacy, as is, although less likely, Zimbabwe.

There are unconfirmed reports that in February the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) passed a resolution recognizing "the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel." If true, this would effectively nullify the OAU's 1973 resolution calling for African states to sever diplomatic relations with Israel, a call heeded by every sub-Saharan African state but Swaziland, Malawi, Lesotho, and, of course, South Africa (see table on page 25).

Jane Hunter is editor of the monthly publication Israeli Foreign Affairs.

Many African countries have recognized the new state of Palestine. Senegal just signed an agreement with the PLO, establishing a sister-city relationship between its capital Dakar and Jerusalem, "capital of an independent Palestine." However, when Kenya announced last December that it would exchange ambassadors with Israel, it justified the move by arguing that the PLO itself has now recognized Israel's right to exist. When it followed Kenya's lead in January, CAR used similar reasoning, adding that it was recognizing Israel to help promote peace in the Middle East.

This contrasts markedly with what happened after the Camp David accords. For three years, not a single African country was moved by Israel's arguments that returning the Sinai to Egypt nullified the complaint that was the basis of the OAU's resolution: that Israel was occupying African territory. Just as ineffective were Israeli arguments that Egypt had established diplomatic relations with Israel and therefore, so should the rest of Africa.

Finally in 1982, Zaire availed itself of the "Egyptian rationale" to reestablish diplomacy, and then in 1983, Liberia did the same. However, it was readily apparent that Zaire's President Sese Seko Mobutu and Liberia's President Samuel Doe were eager for Israeli military aid. Moreover, they were hopeful that Israel's clout in Washington, where their own stock was sagging, would do them some good.

While Israel was not able to rehabilitate either of the African presidents in the U.S. Congress (both being egregious human rights abusers and embezzlers of their own counties' treasuries), it did train their presidential guards. Israel is also credited with helping Doe stave off a *coup d'état* in 1985. As recent as this February, Mobutu called out his guard, which is still partially staffed by Israeli officers, to quell a minor student protest. *SouthScan*, a London weekly, conjectured that Mobutu did not call out regular troops for fear they would join the students.

Cameroon and Togo, which renewed relations in 1986 and 1987 respectively and whose leaders had both been threatened by *coups d'état* were motivated by a desire to have Israel organize and run the military units which served as their personal guards. Côte d'Ivoire's 1986 decision to restore relations with Israel is generally attributed to the ossifying politics of President Houphou t-Boigny, who also favors recognizing the pro-apartheid regime of South Africa.

In early 1987, after Israel pledged it would sign no new military contracts with South Africa (a promise which many analysts, Israeli anti-apartheid activists, and some members of the Congressional Black Caucus regard as spurious), several African countries including Mozambique were reported to be considering upgrading their

relations or bringing "unofficial" relationships into the open. But the *Intifadah* put an end to that.

Underlying the facile arguments Kenya and CAR used earlier this year are some cruel realities explaining why now, in the midst of trying to establish a Palestinian state, African governments are choosing to recognize Israel—why, as a gleeful Israeli official put it to the *Christian Science Monitor*, Israel is all of a sudden "back in the picture in Africa."

First and foremost is the bleak economic situation of most African countries. Low commodities prices and drought have kept growth rates at or below the rate of population growth. And debt to Western banks, incurred during the booming 1970s, has sapped away any capital that might be available for growth. In addition, according to a recent report, the harsh economic "restructuring" demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for continued lending (necessary for repayment of interest) has been the direct cause of death of thousands of African children. Thus many African nations are facing a barrage of economic assaults.

Nigerian officials pushing for the reestablishment of relations with Israel are buttressing their case with the argument that Israel might lobby the United States and other Western governments which control the IMF for easier terms.

Israeli officials say that disappointment with aid from Arab oil-producing states has opened the way for an Israeli return to Africa. It is true that Arab aid never matched the expectations of the early 1970s, when oil prices were on the rise. But the fall in oil prices and the subsequent drop in Arab aid occurred several years ago—as did the discovery by African states that Saudi Arabia had, at the behest of the late CIA Director William Casey, sold oil to South Africa and aided the white regime's proxy forces in Angola and Mozambique.

More compelling factors in the move of African states toward Israel are the recent East-West détente and one of its first fruits, the signing of the Southern Africa peace accord last December. This accord, which calls for the removal of Cuban troops from Angola and independence for Namibia (illegally occupied by South Africa), has resulted in a sudden acceptance, if at arm's length, of South Africa in several African countries, especially Congo. By comparison, Israel and its own ties to the white regime must seem that much less beyond the pale.

The Soviet Union's emerging policy for the developing world, which stresses East-West resolution of regional conflicts and negotiation over armed struggle in local conflicts, also works to Israel's advantage. As nations no longer have the option of playing off East against West, most will try to become favored clients of the West, especially the United States. Israel figures in this equation as either a gateway to or a substitute for Washington. In the case of Ethiopia it is serving as both.

Disenchanted with Ethiopia's costly, faltering war against Tigrean and Eritrean separatists, Moscow has warned President Haile Mariam Mengistu that arms shipments will be scaled back and has encouraged Ethiopia to improve its relations with the United States. Washington, however, has been cool to Ethiopia's approaches, and for the past year, there have been reports that Israel is supplying military advisors, weapons, and

Diplomatic Scoreboard: Israel in Africa*

African States Which Broke Relations with Israel

State/Date Relations Severed	State/Date Relations Severed
Guinea/June 12, 1967	Madagascar (then Malagasy Republic)/October 20, 1973
Uganda/March 30, 1972	Central African Republic/ October 21, 1973
Chad/November 28, 1972	Sierra Leone/October 22, 1973
Congo/December 31, 1972	Ethiopia/October 23, 1973
Niger/January 4, 1973	Nigeria/October 25, 1973
Mali/January 5, 1973	Zambia/October 25, 1973
Burundi/May 16, 1973	Gambia/October 25, 1973
Togo/September 21, 1973	Ghana/October 27, 1973
Zaire/October 4, 1973	Senegal/October 27, 1973
Benin (then Dahomey)/ October 6, 1973	Gabon/October 29, 1973
Rwanda/October 9, 1973	Kenya/November 1, 1973
Cameroon/October 15, 1973	Liberia/November 2, 1973
Equatorial Guinea/October 15, 1973	Côte d'Ivoire/November 8, 1973
Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta)/ October 18, 1973	Botswana/November 13, 1973
Tanzania/October 18, 1973	Mauritius/July 1976

African States Which Have Renewed Diplomatic Relations with Israel

State/Date of Renewal	State/Date of Renewal
Zaire/May 15, 1982	Togo/June 9, 1987
Liberia/August 14, 1983	Kenya/December 24, 1988
Côte d'Ivoire/February 12, 1986	Central African Republic/ January 16, 1989
Cameroon/August 25, 1986	

African States Which Never Had Diplomatic Relations With Israel

Angola Mozambique Zimbabwe

**Of the Arab countries located in Africa, only Egypt has diplomatic ties with Israel.*

spare parts to Addis Ababa.

Last October, Ethiopia's agriculture minister reportedly visited Israel to tour agricultural installations. In December, the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* reported that Israel was giving agricultural aid to Ethiopia and that Ethiopian agriculturalists and economists were taking courses in Israel. Already, this represents the resumption of a thriving secret relationship with Israel that was interrupted in 1985 when the airlift of Ethiopian Jews ("*Falashas*") to Israel was disclosed.

Israel's long-term interest in Ethiopia is to recreate the solid bonds it enjoyed during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie—a bond Israel would welcome with any government which controls the long stretch of shoreline on the Red Sea. And because some of the separatist groups receive strong Arab and Islamic support, Israel's current interest increases.

Diplomatic ties, perhaps accompanied by an Ethiopian pledge to stop voting against Israel at the United Nations could well be part of the price requested by Washington to upgrade its own relations with Addis Ababa. Israel may also ask Ethiopia to allow the 17,000 relatives of *Falashas* in Israel to emigrate, as U.S.-Jewish activists and Ethiopians in Israel are ardently demanding. U.S. President George Bush has already promised to help secure their release.

Rather than peace, the retirement of the USSR from the East-West battlefield in Africa has left a vacuum. Already, according to several reports, the United States and Israel have begun organizing a "contra" war against Libya from bases in Chad, Zaire, CAR, and Cameroon. Zaire is also a launching pad for the war against Angola, in which Israel has been active since 1974. The CIA recently took over support of UNITA, the Angolan "contras" from South Africa. There have also been persistent but unconfirmed reports that Israel is aiding the insurgent Sudanese People's Liberation Army fighting against the Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum. Israel is also aiding Ugandan insurgents.

Also, a religious factor is at work in Nigeria. Muslims, who comprise slightly less than half the population, generally oppose closer relations with Israel, while Christians, who account for 37 percent of the population, favor them. Olubumni Okogie, archbishop of Lagos, recently argued that Nigeria should "normalize" its "illegal" relationship with Israel. He was referring to the massive Israeli commercial presence in Nigeria, where, as in other African countries (most notably Kenya), Israeli companies were allowed to go on functioning after the 1973 diplomatic rupture. By one account, an estimated 5,000 Israelis are involved in economic activities in Nigeria, a huge buildup since 1973, all the more noticeable as other foreign investment has diminished.

Israeli officials say that African governments are in the process of restoring ties because they remember the ambitious development programs Israel ran during the 1960s, and because they believe these programs will help solve their crushing economic problems. However, just as lack of recognition was not a bar to Israeli commercial activity in Africa, Israeli technical aid has not been dependent on open diplomacy.

In 1988, according to statistics compiled by the Division of International Cooperation of the Israeli foreign ministry, 70 Ghanaians, 44 Kenyans, 24 Ethiopians, and 24 Nigerians took courses in Israel. Only Honduras with 75 trainees and the Philippines with 72 trainees sent more trainees to Israel than Ghana did. In 1988, Israeli "consultants" were in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique.

Moreover, Israel cannot fund large in-country development programs and is dependent on U.S. and West German funding for the programs it does run.

What is significant about Israeli aid is its frequent association with intelligence operations and U.S. foreign policy. The United States has spent millions of dollars on Israeli programs in Africa including the training of several intelligence forces, according to a 1986 report in *The Washington Post*. Some of the activities of Israel's labor federation, the *Histadrut*, have been funded by the foreign arm of the AFL-CIO which is often associated with the CIA. Israel's programs in Latin America in the 1960s were funded by the Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress, an avowedly anti-communist program.

Lately Israeli "community development" expertise has been put to work in a forced settlement program in Guatemala and a training program for black South Africans who do not participate in mainstream antiapartheid activities. And Israelis involved in training foreign students often talk about how graduates of their courses in Israel become pro-Israeli lobbyists in their home countries.

In contrast, the PLO has been sending an increasing number of physicians and other experts to assist underserved African populations.

Whether or not much of sub-Saharan Africa makes a headlong dash to recognize Israel depends on Nigeria. When he confirmed that Nigeria was moving toward recognition of Israel, External Affairs Minister Maj. Gen. Ike Nwachukwu said Nigeria would not act unilaterally, but would work through the OAU.

This could mean that Nigeria intends to lobby other member states to adopt the conditions stipulated by President Ibrahim Babangida after he consented to meet with Israeli President Chaim Herzog at Emperor Hirohito's funeral in Japan last February: formal ties will not come until Israel recognizes the PLO and the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own. Or it might be Nigeria's intention to have the OAU's 1973 resolution overturned. □

In Brief

Israel Gets Another Slice of Star Wars Pie

The United States and Israel have signed an agreement to set up a computerized research center to work on systems for Star Wars or the Space Defense Initiative program. According to Israel Radio, Washington will provide over 70 percent of the $35 million that is to be spent on the center over the next five years. The United States is already financing the development of an Israeli anti-tactical ballistic missile under the Star Wars program.

Israel Pursues Stronger Links with Japan

Saying that Israel's embassy in Tokyo should be its second largest after its embassy in Washington, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens has created a special task force to oversee the expansion of Israel's relations with Japan. Although Japan says it will not significantly upgrade its relations with Israel until Israel has taken concrete steps toward peace, Japan agreed in March to expand telecommunications cooperation with Israel.

Israel Resists Norway's Attempts to Inspect Heavy Water

During a visit to Israel in April, Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stöltenberg said that a preliminary agreement for Norway to inspect heavy water it sold to Israel in 1959 is now "a nonstarter." The preliminary agreement specifying that the heavy water be inspected in barrels was initialed last year. Currently, the Norwegian government is demanding to inspect the heavy water inside Israel's nuclear weapons facility in Dimona.

Should Norway determine that Israel used the heavy water, deuterium oxide, for other than "peaceful purposes," it is entitled to demand that Israel return it. That could force Dimona to halt production.

Histadrut Commercially Tied to South Africa

As *Koor*, the giant conglomerate owned by the Israeli labor federation, the *Histadrut*, struggles to stave off bankruptcy, reports are emerging of its ongoing commercial ties to South Africa. Although the *Histadrut* insists it has cut all commercial ties to South Africa (it has been promising to do so since 1981), the *Jerusalem Post* has reported that the troubled *Koor* has taken $80 million worth of loans from four major South African banks.

Earlier, the paper reported that *Koor* had been offered huge bailouts by South African companies and was trying to sell some of its divisions to South African firms.

Argentina Negotiating to Buy Israeli *Kfir* Fighter Jets

After visiting Israel in April, Argentina's defense minister confirmed that negotiations are under way for the sale of Israeli *Kfir* fighter aircraft to Argentina.

Recent Jewish Immigrants From Argentina Want to Leave Israel

The Argentine consulate in Tel Aviv has recently received scores of applications from Argentinian Jews who had immigrated to Israel asking for help in repatriation. The Argentine Jews, who demanded airline tickets, complained of unemployment and low wages. They said that promises the Jewish Agency made to them had not been fulfilled.

Most of the requests have been denied because of the Argentine foreign minstry's budgetary constraints.

Israel Develops New Pilotless Reconnaissance Plane

Israel is currently developing a new generation of pilotless drones which can stay up in the air 10 hours at a time. The airplane will weigh only 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds), and it will transmit pictures from a distance of up to 100 kilometers (60 miles). The United States has expressed interest in the new reconnaisance plane, according to an Israel Television newscast on May 15.

High-Tech Manpower Shortage in Israel

The head of the Council for Israeli High-Tech Industries, Moshe Luben, has told the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* (May 19), that many high-tech industries have recently folded or shut down due to a shortage of scientific manpower. There are currently around 440 high-tech firms in Israel.

Israeli Construction Firms on the Brink

Many Israeli construction firms are on the brink of collapse due to the absence of Palestinian laborers from the Gaza Strip, Israel Television quoted industry sources as saying on May 17. Many plants have also been paralyzed and their owners have requested permission to import workers from Portugal, Turkey, and southern Lebanon. Building contractors, according to *Hadashot* of May 18, have demanded changing contracts to enable them to delay the delivery of apartments to buyers.

1,898 Weapons Stolen From Israeli Arsenals

During the past six years, 1,898 pieces of weaponry have been stolen from Israeli army warehouse, the Israeli daily *Hadashot* reported on May 23. Most of the pilfered arms, including pistols and hand grenades, end up with Israeli criminal figures, sources told the paper.

Justice—Israeli Style

An Israeli judge in Beersheba recently dismissed charges against an Israeli Jew for having thrown a Molotov cocktail at a car from the Gaza Strip. According to the judge, "there is no comparison between a Jew who throws a Molotov cocktail at an Arab car and a Palestinian Arab who throws the firebomb at a Jew."

Settler Children Reflect Parents' Hard Line

The children of Jewish settlers in Gaza's Gush Qteif wrote down their wishes on the occasion of Israel's 41st birthday. Here are a few samples:

"I wish for the State of Israel that all Arabs die and all Jews live."

"I hope that the *Intifadah* ends, all Arabs die, and the Messiah reappears."

"I wish that they [Palestinians] stop throwing stones and that our state triumph."

Gaza Strip Placed Under Curfew for Ninth Time During the *Intifadah*

On May 16, the entire Gaza Strip was placed under curfew for the ninth time since the beginning of the *Intifadah*, Palestinians were ordered to return home from Israel and not stay overnight. In this unprecedented order, about 700,000 Palestinians were thus confined to their homes "until further notice." The official reason for the curfew was to "lessen friction" and "prevent violence," but Israeli army sources acknowledge that the all-inclusive curfew is a manifestation of Israel's policy of collective punishment. Gazans were being punished for the killing of one Israeli soldier and the disappearance of another the previous week.

Listed below are the dates, lengths, and occasions for the nine total curfews:

Date	Length in Days	Occasion
March 29, 1988	3	Land Day
August 14, 1988	3	Deportation of Gazans
November 15, 1988	5	Palestinian Declaration of Independence
December 22, 1988	2	Arafat's U.N. Address in Geneva
January 1, 1989	2	Fatah's Anniversary (founded in 1965)
March 29, 1989	2	Land Day
April 16, 1989	2	Anniversary of Abu Jihad's Assassination
May 8, 1989	3	Israeli Independence Day
May 16, 1989	3	Collective Punishment

Israeli Army Truck Deliberately Smashes into Palestinian Car—Two Killed, Five Wounded

In an incident near Nablus reminiscent of the act that sparked the *Intifadah* in Gaza 17 months ago, an Israeli military truck deliberately collided with a car carrying seven Palestinian youths. Two 25-year-olds were killed and five teenagers were injured.

From his hospital bed in Nablus, one of the wounded teenagers said that the seven youths were on their way home to Salfit when the driver, who was killed, noted that a military truck was tracking the car. The driver pulled the car to the side of the road, and it was then that the truck rammed the car. The Israeli soldiers looked on as a number of Palestinian motorists tried to extricate the bodies from the wreck.

Palestinian Youth Arrested in Hospital After Undergoing Surgery

On May 19, the Israeli occupation authorities arrested 24-year old Muhannad Abdullah Jubran of Jenin as he laid in his hospital bed in Al-Ittihad Hospital. The arrest was made barely 24 hours after Jubran had undergone surgery for a bullet wound to his intestines and pelvis. Since the beginning of the *Intifadah*, this was the fifth time that Jubran had been wounded in confrontations with the Israeli army.

"Mini-*Intifadah*" in the Galilee

On May 12, the Israeli press reported a "mini-*Intifadah*" inside Israel. Israeli flags were burned or ripped in a number of Palestinian villages in the Galilee. In addition, in Haifa, two Palestinian flags were hoisted atop of utility poles and pro-*Intifadah* slogans were scrawled on the walls of one neighborhood. Israeli police have reportedly conducted an investigation and made arrests among the local Palestinian population.

Israeli Supreme Court Upholds Demolitions

On May 12, Israel's High Court of Justice has upheld an army order to demolish the homes of those caught throwing Molotov cocktails "even if no losses or damages are incurred."

Two New Settlements Near Bethlehem

On May 9, Israel's independence day, the Israeli Council of Settlements in Judea and Sumaria laid the cornerstones for the two new settlements of Tsurif, near the Palestinian village of Surif, and Ofrim, to the south of the present Israeli settlement, Beth Aryeh. The two settlements are among eight new ones which the present coalition government has agreed upon. The settlement authorities plan to settle 2,500 families in these two new settlements in the coming five years.

Israeli settlers arrived to lay the cornerstones in armored cars, under army escort. The following day, Jewish settlers attacked several homes and a car, smashing windows in the village of Surif.

FAITHFUL WITNESSES:

Palestinian Children
Recreate their World
by
Kamal Boullata
Preface by
John Berger

A touching, often disturbing collection of sketches and paintings presents life in the West Bank and Gaza from a new perspective: that of Palestinian children.
Life magazine.

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Bana': The 14-Year-Old Girl Under House Arrest

Kate B. Rouhana

Bana', the girl we'd come to meet, is Sheikh Al-Sayeh's granddaughter. Since December 5, 1988, she has been under arrest.

The girl who opened the door of the unpretentious Jerusalem home looked older than her 14 years. Although we were strangers knocking and she was alone at home, her somber black eyes never showed a hint of fear or suspicion. We introduced ourselves as journalists, and she let us in.

In point of fact, Bana' had previously met my companion, an American woman who lives in Jerusalem. But the girl did not recognize her right off. She had intervened when Bana', perched on a Jerusalem wall, had defied Israeli army personnel in four jeeps who insisted she had to get down from the wall. Protracted negotiations and entreaties from a crowd of neighbors would not budge Bana'. Finally the soldiers agreed to leave on the "condition" that she get down after they leave. When Bana' finally did come down that afternoon as the last soldiers departed, it was not the agreement with the soldiers but the sight of her school headmistress, a nun, that sent her scrambling off the wall.

As we entered Bana's house, the main decor on the wall facing us was a large photograph of a young Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al-Sayeh, speaker of the Palestine National Council.

Bana', the girl we'd come to meet, is Sheikh Al-Sayeh's granddaughter. Since December 5, 1988, she has been under arrest. As she is a 14-year-old and a girl, the judge ordered her to remain under house arrest instead of in prison. Her trial is still pending however; it is not scheduled to take place for another five months. While not by any means the first young girl to be arrested, Bana' was the first to be placed under house arrest pending trial. Since then, at least five more girls and five boys have been served similar orders. Not all, however, are as lucky as Bana'. Several were sent to homes of distant relatives they barely knew—two were sent north to the Galilee.

Bana' has been charged with throwing stones at Jewish settlers. She denies these charges. In confident English, she tells of what happened while she and two girlfriends were walking in Beit Hanina along the Jerusalem-Ramallah road on December 5.

> We heard shooting nearby so we ran away. Then they shot at us, but still we ran. They caught us and pummeled us with their hands, guns, and boots. They put the three of us two 15-year-old girls and myself—in the police car for an hour, during which time they kept kicking us and insulting our parents horribly.
>
> At the Moscobiyyeh, they kept us standing on one leg with both hands raised in the air. I relaxed my hand slightly for a moment, I was aching.

Kate B. Rouhana is a freelance writer living in Arlington, Massachusetts.

The guards kicked me and called me a "dog" and laughed at us.

When word came that the stones that Bana' and her friend were accused of throwing had hit a driver, two women, and a baby on a bus, "they hit us more," said Bana'.

Eventually they were taken individually for six hours of interrogation.

They wrote something in Hebrew on the paper and threatened to do unspeakable things to me if I didn't confess. I wrote on the paper that I refused to confess. The interrogator alternated between being nice and being rude. He said he was my father's friend. I told him, "You're a liar. My father would never have a friend like you."

Bana's voice is calm and steady, except when she punctuates her story with "OK-OK-OK," which comes out as one long multi-syllable word, prounounced in adolescent fashion, revealing her age and her window of vulnerability. Otherwise, she shows few signs of currently being or ever having been afraid.

They led us away to our cell—a small room with 14 girls, Palestinians and a few South Africans whose visas had expired. At first we didn't say much—We didn't know if we could trust them. There were only mattresses and blankets that smelled like chickens in the cell. The Israeli Jews in the next cell had everything they needed.

The next morning they brought us to court. My father was there. I missed him so I went to hug him. The guards kicked me and pulled me away from him. They said, "If you want to throw stones, you will have no father." My father and friends were crying. We didn't cry because we didn't want them to worry. "Don't worry about us," we told them.

At the trial, my arrest was extended.

A few days later, my body broke out in a rash from the blankets, and I asked to see a doctor. He gave me baby lotion on a small cotton ball for my whole body.

Another day, we were taken out to the playground for 30 minutes as usual. They gave a Jewish woman—a drug dealer—a basketball to play with, but none to the Palestinian women. I was seething. I told the girls we had to do something, so we all sat down and sang nationalist songs in protest [of] their unfairness. The supervisor came over and hit me. I told him it wasn't fair to give that woman a basketball and not us.

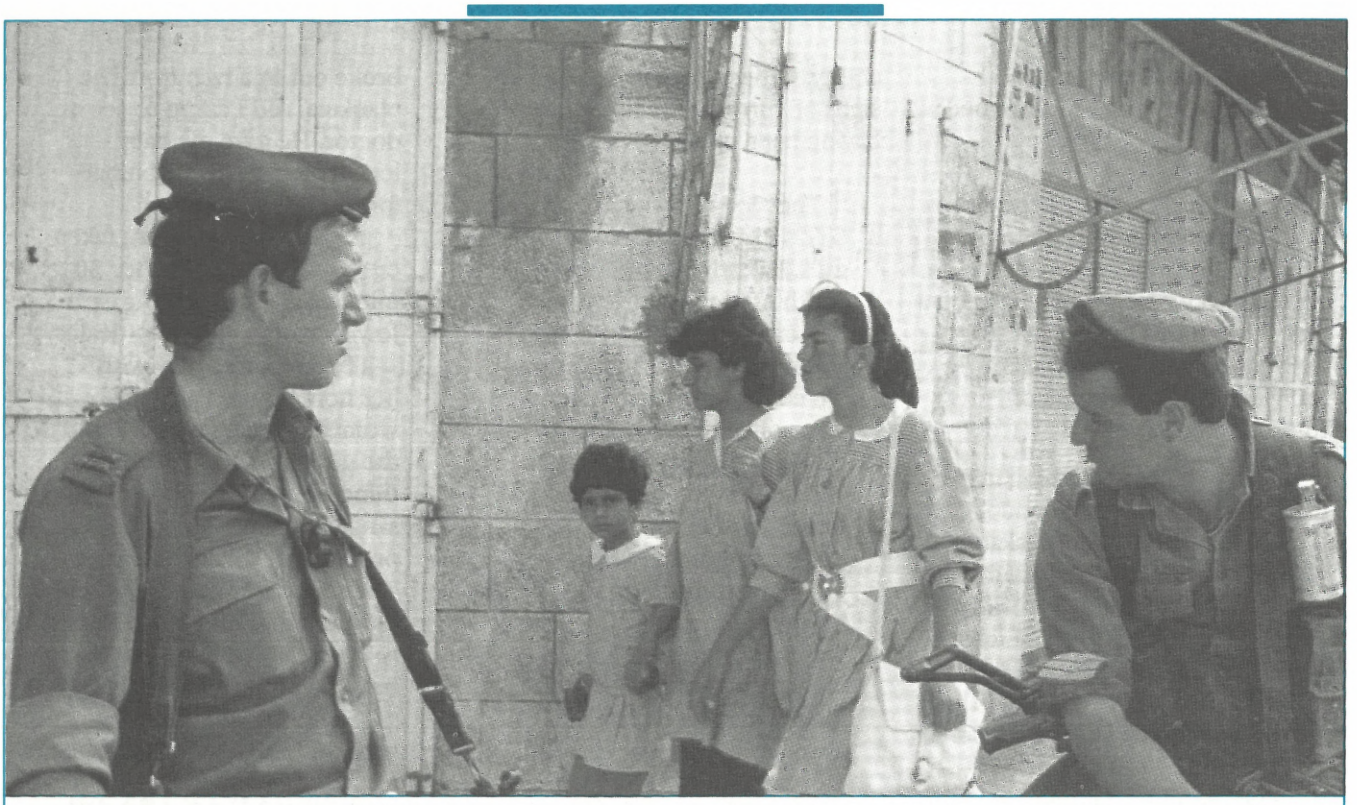
"She's not like you," he replied. "She's Israeli and she can have anything she wants. But you deserve nothing—you threw stones at us and you want to kill us."

Bana' replied, "I will throw stones at *you* and I'll kill *you* too."

The supervisor threatened, "I'll take you to your room and then you'll see what I will do with you."

photo by Mourad Abdul Raouf

Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al-Sayeh, center, chairman of the Palestine National Council, is Bana's grandfather.



Palestinian girls on their way to school. file photo

"Do whatever you want," replied Bana'.

She continues her story.

> We didn't care and we weren't afraid. They took us back to the room and turned it upside down, taking everything away—blankets, handkerchiefs, cigarettes, pen—and we needed that pen.
>
> At breakfast the next morning, the Jewish criminal prisoners insulted us, though we did not provoke them. They said, "We killed Abu Jihad and we'll kill Abu Ammar and next we'll kill you. She waved a sharp knife at us, and we were afraid. The guard came. He told her not to worry about us. "We'll kill them all," he said.

Eventually, in a bizarre arrangement, Bana' and her friends were transferred to a convent. Still, they did not confess. The order was later changed so they were under house arrest until the trial, which was then set for July.

Though Bana' did not confess, the judges may not be lenient in her case because the stones that she and her girlfriends are charged with throwing wounded several people on a bus. One wonders how Bana' will feel about her life ambition to be a lawyer—"because they've helped people in the *Intifadah* so much"—after her day in military court.

Bana' is no stranger to prisons. Her father, Bassam, a union activist, was arrested when she was a newborn, and sentenced to eight years in prison for political activity.

Now awaiting that decision, Bana' is stoic, even serene. "At least home is better than prison," she says optimistically.

Bana' is no stranger to prisons. Her father, Bassam, a union activist, was arrested when she was a newborn, and sentenced to eight years in prison for political activity. Throughout her childhood, she only knew her father behind bars, which affected her greatly, according to her mother.

> We would go back and forth to the prison, on visits at 4:00 a.m., in the rain, she [often] opened her eyes there. She turned out differently.

Bana' was the one to open the front door when the knock came in the middle of the night a few months into the *Intifadah*. Still groggy from sleep, she was shocked to find soldiers and *Shin Beth* (Israeli secret police) officers on the doorstep. They pushed past her and demanded her father, who was asleep. She had to wake him, and watch, weeping, as they took him away for the second time—to 16 months of administrative detention. That, she says, was when she got so angry she stopped feeling afraid. □

BOOK REVIEW

Still Small Voices

Mazin Omar

STILL SMALL VOICES, John and Janet Wallach. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 210 pp. $18.95.

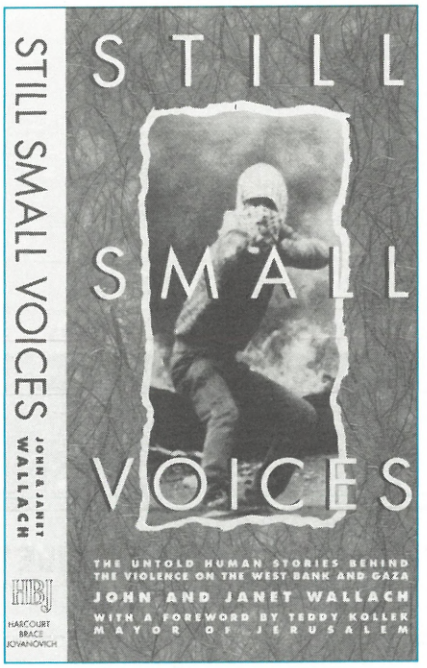
For many Americans watching the evening television news the ongoing bloody battles in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, pitting young, stone-hurling, Palestinian children against well-armed Israeli soldiers must have come as a harsh reminder of the "horror scenes" the Israelis inflicted upon the people of Lebanon when they invaded their country in 1982.

"The steady stream of violence seemed to dehumanize the (Palestinian-Israeli) conflict," thought John and Janet Wallach "reducing its victims to abstractions, even taking precedence over the rights being fought for."

Consequently, the authors set out early last year to remedy the situation, regrettably, in a limited way. They journeyed to the West Bank and Gaza Strip "to go beyond the stereotypes" and "allow Palestinians and Israelis themselves to tell their own stories" or "the compelling reasons for each person's belief in the righteousness of his own cause."

The Wallachs are seasoned writers: John is the foreign editor of the Hearst newspapers working out of Washington, and his wife, Janet, has written for several prominent American publications.

Mazin Omar is the pen name of a Palestinian American who has requested anonymity.


STILL SMALL VOICES
JOHN & JANET WALLACH
STILL
SMALL
VOICES
THE UNTOLD HUMAN STORIES BEHIND THE VIOLENCE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA
JOHN AND JANET WALLACH
WITH A FOREWORD BY TEDDY KOLLEK MAYOR OF JERUSALEM
HBJ
HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH

After spending a few months last year criss-crossing the Holy Land and drinking tens of cups of Turkish coffee and eating scores of delectable watermelon slices, they have come up with 12 persons to explain the root causes of the bitter conflict. Those persons, they write, included "those considered terrorists, to extreme fundamentalists, to moderate pragmatists."

The husband-and-wife team said they were guided in their selection by the number of Palestinians and Jewish settlers living on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They calculated that there were more than one-and-a-half million Palestinians, and about 70,000 Jewish settlers. Thus, nine Palestinians and three Israeli settlers were profiled.

The Wallachs have set a limited goal for themselves in this otherwise commendable project. They wanted their book to be remembered as one "about human beings who all believe deeply in the righteousness of their cause." And if by the end of the book the reader feels some sympathy for each of them perhaps it will be easier to understand why the conflict is so complex and heart wrenching, they said.

One would have hoped the Wallachs could have been a little more daring—not necessarily in the Oriana Fallaci style—and challenge the premises of the Israeli settlers at the very least (as even many Israelis do nowadays). Otherwise, little additional light is revealed in the well-written profiles. The views of these prominent Palestinian and Israeli activists in the book, albeit in depth, have more or less been reported here and there. Actually at this stage, the fighting is centered on getting rid of the brutal Israeli occupation, of which the settlers' case is but one aspect.

The Wallachs have produced a readable book but with a little more care they could have avoided some of the historical shorthand or repeating some of the shortcomings of Israeli reporters and unlearned authors on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a situation which may lead some to accuse them of depending uncritically on Israelis as their primary sources. For example, Ahmed Shukairi, the first chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization could not be described as a "guer-

rilla" leader for he was not; Islamic fundamentalism in the Gaza Strip was not imported from the West Bank; and the spelling of some Palestinian names are erroneous—it is Sami*ba* Al-Khalil, not (the Hebrew-pronounced) Sami*kha*, who is one of those prominently profiled as "the First Lady of the West Bank."

The Wallachs should have talked to a youthful stone-thrower like the *kaffiyeh*-clad Palestinian with the slingshot on the cover of their book for a down-to-earth outpouring about life on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where daily confrontations with the occupation forces have become a way of life for the young Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the Wallachs captured some striking vignettes as in their description about moving around in the occupied Palestinian lands:

> As we drove in cars with blue Arab license plates we learned the sense of occupation; the checkpoints, the army jeeps, the soldiers on the rooftops all became a threat. How different it was when we rode in yellow plated Israeli cars along the same roads to the fortified settlements. Suddenly, it seemed, those very same soldiers were there to protect us."

They wanted their book to be remembered as one "about human beings who all believe deeply in the righteousness of their cause."

This is not a pro-Palestinian book, as the Wallachs feared some may accuse them of being. But, nevertheless, the Wallachs have, in their nine Palestinian profiles, contributed sympathetically to a better understanding of the Palestinian cause. □

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FOR THE RECORD

Principles and Pragmatism:

American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Excerpts from U.S. Secretary of State Jame A. Baker's May 22, 1989 address to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) annual convention.

I am very pleased to be with you today and to address one of the best attended conferences in a city of well-attended conferences. That testifies to your interest as American citizens in our foreign policy and I applaud that. It also testifies to AIPAC's effectiveness in presenting the views of American supporters of Israel.

It has been said that AIPAC manages to bring together the Executive and Congress in a way they would not normally associate. I'd agree with that and I would add only that we have a name for such coming together. It is called bipartisanship. And American bipartisan support for Israel is a great, enduring achievement, not only for AIPAC, not only for Israel's supporters but also, above all, for America's *national* interest.

There have been many analyses of the U.S.-Israeli relationship over the years and most of them begin with the fact that we share common values of freedom and democracy. That is the golden thread in the tapestry of U.S.-Israeli ties and there are other strands as well. I was proud to work in the Reagan Administration that recognized the importance of U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation and gave fiber and sinew to our strategic partnership. I'm proud also to have played a part in pioneering a historic free trade agreement with Israel which may well become a model for other nations. President Bush believes, and I believe, that on these issues, there can be only one policy and that is *continuity*. American support for Israel is the foundation of our approach to the Middle East.

Such support has become all the more important as we approach what I think is a critical juncture in the Middle East. For many years we have associated that region with either the vanished glories of ancient history or the terrible costs of modern conflict. But now the world is changing. We have seen longstanding problems in other regions begin to abate. The President spoke last week of promising and hopeful, if incomplete developments in the Soviet Union. Everywhere there is a quickening consciousness that the globe is being transformed through the search for democracy, the spread of free enterprise and technological progress.

American support for Israel is the foundation of our approach to the Middle East.

The Middle East should be able to participate fully in these new developments. Often we think of the region as a place full of precious resources, such as oil and minerals. But the area's most precious resource is the lives of its peoples.

And that is the stake. Are the peoples of the Middle East going to safeguard their most precious resource? Are they going to join the rest of the changing world in the works of peace? Or is this region going to pioneer in conflict once more, through the proliferation of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles?

The people of Israel are vitally concerned with these questions. Israel is a vigorous democracy. The Israelis are among world leaders in communications, electronics and avionics —the new technological revolutions. And Israel understood long ago that the most important of her natural resources is the skill and intelligence of her people.

Peace Process: Principles and Pragmatism

This is the wider context in which we and Israel must consider the peace process. The outcome is of vital concern both to Israel's future and for our vision of a free and peaceful world.

Not so long ago, we marked a decade of the Camp David Peace Accords. That occasion reminded us not only of how far we have come but how much further we must go. I want to report that we and Israel have taken some important steps forward.

Before Prime Minister [Yitzhak] Shamir visited Washington, we had called for some Israeli ideas on how to restart the peace process. We did so based on our conviction that a key condition for progress was a productive U.S.-Israeli partnership. And I believe that the best way to be productive is through consultation rather than confrontation.

I can tell you that we were not disappointed. The Prime Minister will forgive me, I am sure, if I divulge to you a conversation at our very first meeting.

The Prime Minister said that, in preparing for his visit, he had studied President Bush and me, just as he expected that we had studied him. I had been described by the media as an ever flexible pragmatist. The Prime Minister had been described as an inflexible man of ideological principle. Well, said the Prime Minister, the journalists were wrong in both cases. Yes, he said, I am a man of principle, but I am also a pragmatist, who knows what political compromise means. And, he said that it was clear that I—although a pragmatist—was also a man of principle, and that principle would guide my foreign policy approach.

Of course, I agreed with the Prime Minister. If ever an opening statement achieved its goal of establishing a strong working relationship, this was it. We understood each other to be pragma-

tists, guided by principle.

As we approach the peace process, together, we understand Israel's caution especially when assessing Arab attitudes about peace. I don't blame Israel for exercising such caution. Its history and geopolitical situation require it.

At the same time, caution must never become paralysis. Ten years after Camp David, Egypt remains firmly committed to peace and Arab attitudes are changing. Egypt's readmission into the Arab League on its own terms and with the peace treaty intact is one sign of change. Evolving Palestinian attitudes are another. Much more needs to be done—to be demonstrated—that such change is real. But it cannot be ignored even now. This is surely a time when, as the Prime Minister said, the right mix of principles and pragmatism is required.

U.S. Views

As we assess these changes, U.S. policies benefit from a longstanding commitment to sound principles, principles which have worked in practice to advance the peace process.

First, the U.S. believes that the objective of the peace process is a comprehensive settlement achieved through negotiations based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. In our view, these negotiations must involve territory for peace, security and recognition for Israel and all states, and Palestinian political rights.

Second, for negotiations to succeed, they must allow the parties to deal directly with each other, face-to-face. A properly structured international conference could be useful ***at an appropriate time***, but only if it did not interfere with or in any way replace or be a substitute for the direct talks.

Third, the issues involved in the negotiations are far too complex, and the emotions are far too deep, to move directly to a final settlement. Accordingly, some transitional period is needed, associated in time and sequence with negotiations on final status. Such a transition will allow the parties to take the measure of each other's performance, to encourage attitudes to change, and to demonstrate that peace and coexistence is desired.

Fourth, in advance of direct negotiations, the United States and no other party, inside or outside, can or will dictate an outcome. That is why the United States does not support annexation or permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza, nor do we support the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

I would add there that we do have an idea about the reasonable middle ground to which a settlement should be directed. That is, self-government for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in a manner acceptable to Palestinians, Israel and Jordan. Such a formula provides ample scope for Palestinians to achieve their full political rights. It also provides ample protection for Israel's security as well.

Let the Arab world take concrete steps toward accommodation with Israel—not in place of the peace process, but as a catalyst for it. End the economic boycott. Stop the challenge to Israel's standing in international organizations. Repudiate the odious line that Zionism is racism.

Pre-Negotiations

Following these principles, we face a pragmatic issue: how to get negotiations underway. Unfortunately, the gap between the parties on key issues such as Palestinian representation and the shape of a final settlement remains very wide. Violence has also soured the atmosphere. A quick move to negotiations is therefore unlikely. And in the absence of either a minimum of good will or any movement to close the gap, a high-visibility American initiative has little basis on which to stand.

If we were to stop here, the situation would be gloomy indeed. But we are not going to stop with the status quo. We are engaged and will work to help create an environment to launch and sustain negotiations. This will require tough, but necessary decisions for peace by everyone. It will also require a commitment to a process of negotiations clearly tied to the search for a permanent settlement of the conflict.

When Prime Minister Shamir visited Washington in March, he indicated that he shared our view that the status quo was unacceptable. He brought an idea for elections to—in his words—"launch a political negotiating process" which would involve transitional arrangements and final status. The Prime Minister made clear that all sides would be free to bring their preferred positions to the table, and that the negotiated outcome must be acceptable to all. The United States welcomed these Israeli ideas and undertook to see whether it could help in creating an atmosphere which could sustain such a process.

Just last week, the Israeli cabinet approved a more detailed version of the Prime Minister's proposal, indicating Israeli Government positions on some, but not all, of the issues involved. The Israeli proposal is, in our view, an important and positive start down the road toward constructing workable negotiations.

The Israeli Government ***has*** offered an initiative, and it ***has*** given us something with which to work. It has taken a stand on some important issues—and this deserves a constructive Palestinian and broader Arab response.

Much work needs to be done—to elicit Palestinian and Arab thinking on the key elements in the process, to flesh out some details of the Israeli proposals, and to bridge areas where viewpoints differ. Both sides must build political constituencies for peace. Each idea, proposal, or detail, should be developed as a deal-maker, not a deal breaker.

It may be possible to reach agreement, for example, on the standards of a workable elections process. Such elections should be free and fair, and free of interference from any quarter. Through open access to media and outside observers, the integrity of the electoral process can be affirmed. And participation in the elections should be as open as possible.

It is therefore high time for serious political dialogue between Israeli officials and Palestinians in the territories to bring about a common understanding on these and other issues. Peace, and the peace process, must be built from the "ground up." Palestinians have it within their power to help define the shape of this initiative and its essential elements. They shouldn't shy from a dialogue with Israel that can transform the current environment, and determine the ground rules for getting to, conducting,

and moving beyond elections.

We should not hide from ourselves the difficulties that face even these steps at the beginning. For many Israelis, it will not be easy to enter a negotiating process whose successful outcome will in all probability involve territorial withdrawal and the emergence of a new political reality. For Palestinians, such an outcome will mean an end to the illusion of control over all of Palestine, and it will mean full recognition of Israel as a neighbor and partner in trade and human contact.

Challenges Ahead

There is no real constructive alternative to the process I have outlined. Continuation of the status quo will lead to increasing violence and worsening prospects for peace. Now is the time to move toward a serious negotiating process, to create the atmosphere for a renewed peace process. Let the Arab world take concrete steps toward accommodation with Israel—not in place of the peace process, but as a catalyst for it. End the economic boycott. Stop the challenge to Israel's standing in international organizations. Repudiate the odious line that Zionism is racism.

For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza—security and otherwise—can be accommodated in a settlement based on Resolution 242. Foreswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights.

For Palestinians, now is the time to speak with one voice for peace. Renounce the policy of phases in all languages, not just those addressed to the West. Practice constructive diplomacy, not attempts to distort international organizations, such as the World Health Organization. Amend the covenant. Translate the dialogue of violence in the intifada into a dialogue of politics and diplomacy. Violence will not work. Reach out to Israelis and convince them of your peaceful intentions. You have the most to gain from doing so, and no one else can or will do it for you.

For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel. . . . Foreswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights.

And no one is going to "deliver" Israel for you.

For outside parties—in particular, the Soviet Union—now is the time to make "new thinking" a reality as it applies to the Middle East. I must say that Chairman [Mikhail] Gorbachev and Foreign Minister [Eduard] Shevardnadze told me in Moscow ten days ago that Soviet policy is changing. New laws regarding emigration will soon be discussed by the Supreme Soviet. Jewish life in the Soviet Union is also looking better, with students beginning to study their heritage freely. Finally, the Soviet Union agreed with us last week that Prime Minister Shamir's election proposal was worthy of study.

These are all positive signs.

But the Soviets must go further to demonstrate convincingly that they are serious about new thinking in the Arab-Israel conflict. Let Moscow restore diplomatic ties with Israel, for example. The Soviets should also help promote a serious peace process, not just empty slogans. It is time for the Soviet Union to behave responsibly when it comes to arms, and stop the supply of sophisticated weapons to countries like Libya.

I said at the beginning of this speech that the Middle East had approached a turning point. I believe that this region, so full of potential, will not remain immune from the changes sweeping the rest of the world. These changes begin with the quest for democracy, for individual freedom and choice. Long ago Israel chose this path. And long ago, the American people decided to walk with Israel in her quest for peace and security.

The policy I have described today reaffirms and renews that course. For our part, the United States will move ahead steadily and carefully, in a step-by-step approach designed to help the parties make the necessary decisions for peace. Perhaps Judge Learned Hand expressed it best when he said, "we shall have to be content with short steps, . . . but we shall have gone forward, if we bring to our task . . . patience, understanding, sympathy, forbearance, generosity, fortitude and above all an inflexible determination." □

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FOR THE RECORD

Prominent Palestinians on Shamir's Elections Proposal

On April 26, 83 prominent Palestinians living in occupied Palestine signed a statement rejecting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's call for elections in the Israeli-occupied territories. Following is the complete text of that statement.

WHEREAS the Palestinian *Intifadah* is entering its eighteenth month with force and self-confidence, affirming its ability to continue until the realization of its goals, being: the removal of occupation, guaranteeing the right of return and self-determination for the Palestinian people, and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital under the leadership of the PLO, and

WHEREAS the PLO is waging a political war, based on the resolutions of the recent Palestine National Council (PNC) session in Algiers, and

WHEREAS we find the government of Israel facing an unprecedented international isolation, where Israel has been divested of its principal weapons, and has emerged as a terrorist state, bloodily suppressing an unarmed people which is struggling for national independence with legitimate means. And instead of responding to the Palestinian peace appeal and the demands of the *Intifadah*, instead of going directly to the PLO in the context of an international conference able to achieve a just and comprehensive solution, instead of instituting guarantees for the future and security of all the region's states,

We see [Yitzhak] Shamir present a plan which is no more than a media maneuver, aimed at extricating Israel from its isolation. His plan entails big contradictions and fallacies, and evades the core of the crisis, by selectively focusing on secondary elements.

What is conspicuously surprising in this plan is its total contradiction with the real exercise of the Shamir government of its authority on the territory of occupied Palestine, where its military tools actively search out national leaders and political activists in order to deport and imprison them, and on occasion, to kill them. That, in addition to the outright violation of human rights and brutal oppression to which the Palestinians are being subjected in our occupied state, it [the Shamir government] clearly disregards the Palestinian declared political positions which form a clear response to Shamir's elections idea. Those positions are the following:

1) The PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in the State of Palestine and wherever Palestinians may be. The Palestinians have long ago chosen their representatives, and they have reasserted that choice through the *Intifadah*. Individuals of that people are being martyred these days in order to say that the PLO is our sole, legitimate representative. Shamir's plan ignores this fact.

2) The Palestinian people, in all places of its dispersion and presence, is a single people, indivisible. The PLO, with its legitimate leadership and official machinery is a symbol of the unity of this people in Palestine and abroad, and the embodiment of its national identity. We see in the attempt to elect local representatives an attempt to divide this single people into those abroad and those inside. Moreover, the Shamir plan symbolizes the lack of seriousness of its author. What is needed is negotiations to solve the problem with the Palestinian people, and not part of the Palestinian people. Negotiations should be carried out with the representatives of the whole Palestinian people and not representatives of its part.

3) In addition to being the sole representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO is the framework of struggle and the symbol which embodies the identity of the Palestinian people in its entirety. The PLO represents the ambition to return, self-determination, and the will and mechanism to set up an independent Palestinian state.

We see in Shamir's attempt to circumvent the PLO an attempt to circumvent that political dimension and those aspirations. By redirecting the debate in the media and on the international level to a question of representing the "inhabitants of the territories," and presenting the problem as one of "inhabitants in the Land of Israel," Shamir does not address the question of a people seeking national independence.

It follows, therefore, that we see in the rejection of negotiations with the PLO a rejection of the existence of the people of Palestine seeking to realize its right to self-determination.

The Palestinian rejection of the idea of holding elections prior to Israeli army withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in our occupied state, stems from the positions outlined above. It is not proof, as some Israelis claim, of our people's rejection of democracy. The latest PNC meeting has shown that the Palestinian people loves democracy and practices it too. The PLO, in general, and the *Intifadah*, in particular, have accomplished much by way of internal democratic methods.

Our rejection of the elections, as proposed by Shamir, is not a rejection of elections as a democratic feature, but a rejection of a selective plan which does not address the core of the problem. Shamir's election plan is not part of a clearly established political process culminating in ending Israeli occupation and achieving Palestinian national independence.

The realization of peace in the region cannot come about through plans, like Shamir's, which is presented for media consumption, for ending the *Intifadah*, and for gaining time. We believe that ending the conflict and attaining peace require the following:

1) The Israeli government must affirm that the Palestinians are a people with a right to a secure life in an independent state.

2) The Israeli government must recognize the need to negotiate with the PLO in the context of an international conference for the purpose of ending occupation and setting up the independent Palestinian state.

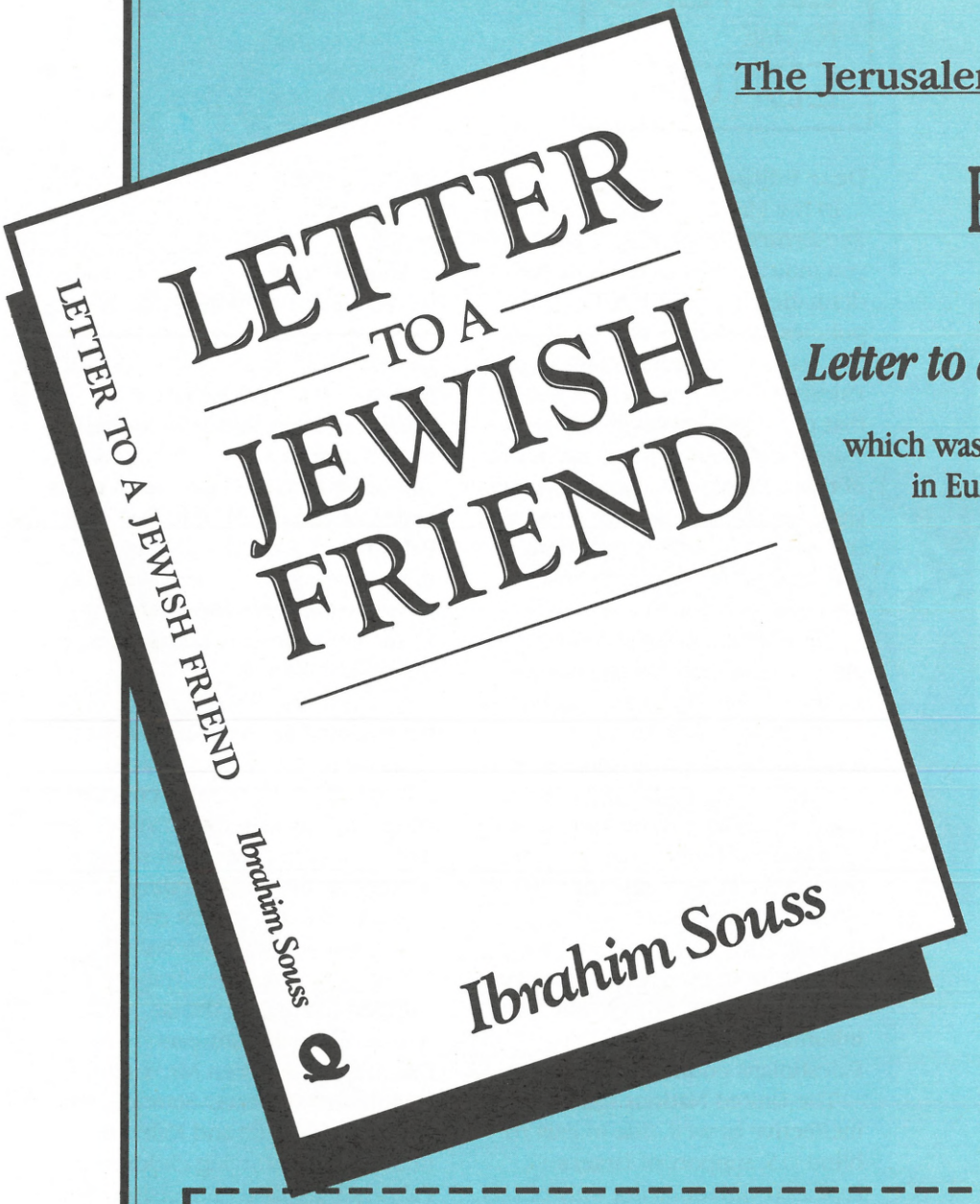
3) The United Nations should administer the Occupied Territories in a transitional period.

4) The international conference must identify appropriate security guarantees for all the states in the region, according to bases determined by all parties.

We find now that the onus falls on the shoulders of the Israeli government in taking the next step for achieving peace.

Until now there has been a total absence of any serious reply by the Israeli government to the peace initiative presented by the Palestinian people through its national council and its leadership—the PLO.

If Israel wants to prove its seriousness in going in the direction of peace, its government must respond positively to this initiative and immediately halt its oppressive and inhumane practices in the territory of our occupied state. □



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In the March 1989 editorial of *The Return*, "High Hopes Dashed," you indicate that in the absence of dramatic change in U.S.-Israeli policies, hardliners will sabotage the major accomplishments of the Palestinian leaders. But the facts are that those accomplishments are essentially the individual sacrifices of those Palestinians who have been shot, imprisoned, and tortured, and the vast numbers who continue to suffer economic and personal deprivation.

High hopes or rose-colored glasses—the realities are all the same. The United States and Israel hardly have a dichotomy of interests. The United States is determined to maintain a dominant position in the Middle East (to the exclusion of the Russians), while the Israelis cling to the idea of a Greater State of Israel which includes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In these circumstances, neither morality, justice, nor the inhuman suffering of the Palestinians counts for much.

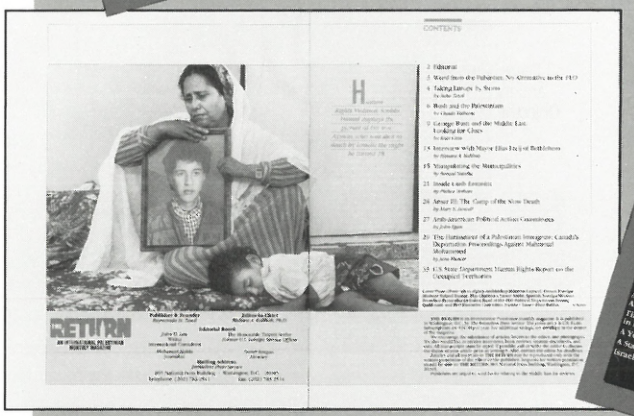
The United Nations has been ineffective as well, due in part to blind U.S. support of Israel's repeated violations not only of U.N. charter provisions, but of its own law and international law as well.

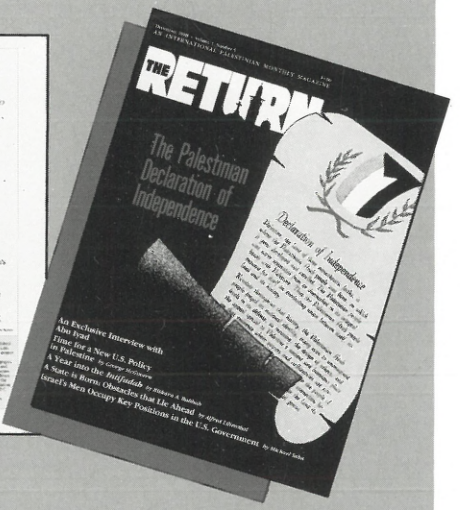
In the best of worlds, the sacrifices of the Palestinians might lead to some kind of reasonable solution, but as matters stand, the rubble and blood-splattered streets of Tulkarem, Rafah, Nablus, and countless other villages are only tragically muted testimonies to the courage and desperation of a people oppressed.

The salvation of the Palestinians lies not only with Mr. Arafat, who has earnestly and heroically struggled on their behalf, but with other Arab nations, who, by virtue of proximity or political structure, may themselves one day be perceived by Israel to be a threat to its hegemony in the Middle East. The Palestinians are indeed ill-fated, first the subject of an egregious British mandate and then the unwitting victims of an international balance of power struggle.

Undoubtedly a struggle which has endured for over half a century lacks force and impact which otherwise might prompt concern and action by other Arab states. But that aside, the Palestinian struggle represents the still-bleeding wounds of a war fought over 50 years ago, in which not only the Palestinians but other Arab nations suffered a crushing defeat. At the moment, the Palestinians are all that remain between Mr. Yitzhak Shamir and a Greater State of Israel and if the Shamirs and Kahanes see in the stone-throwing children of Palestine the final convulsions of a dying resistance, the Palestinian cause may well be lost and most certainly with it, peace in the Middle East.

C. J. Mead
Black River Falls, Wisconsin

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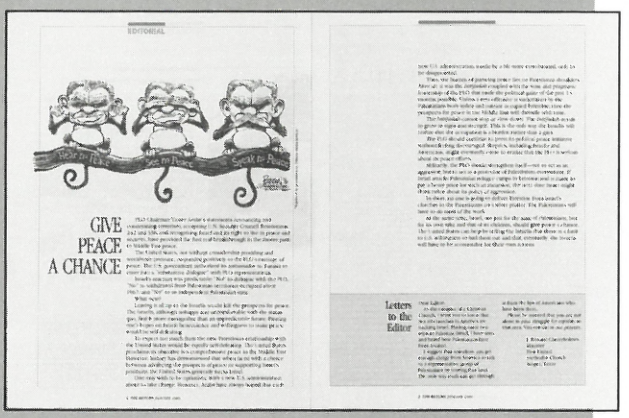

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